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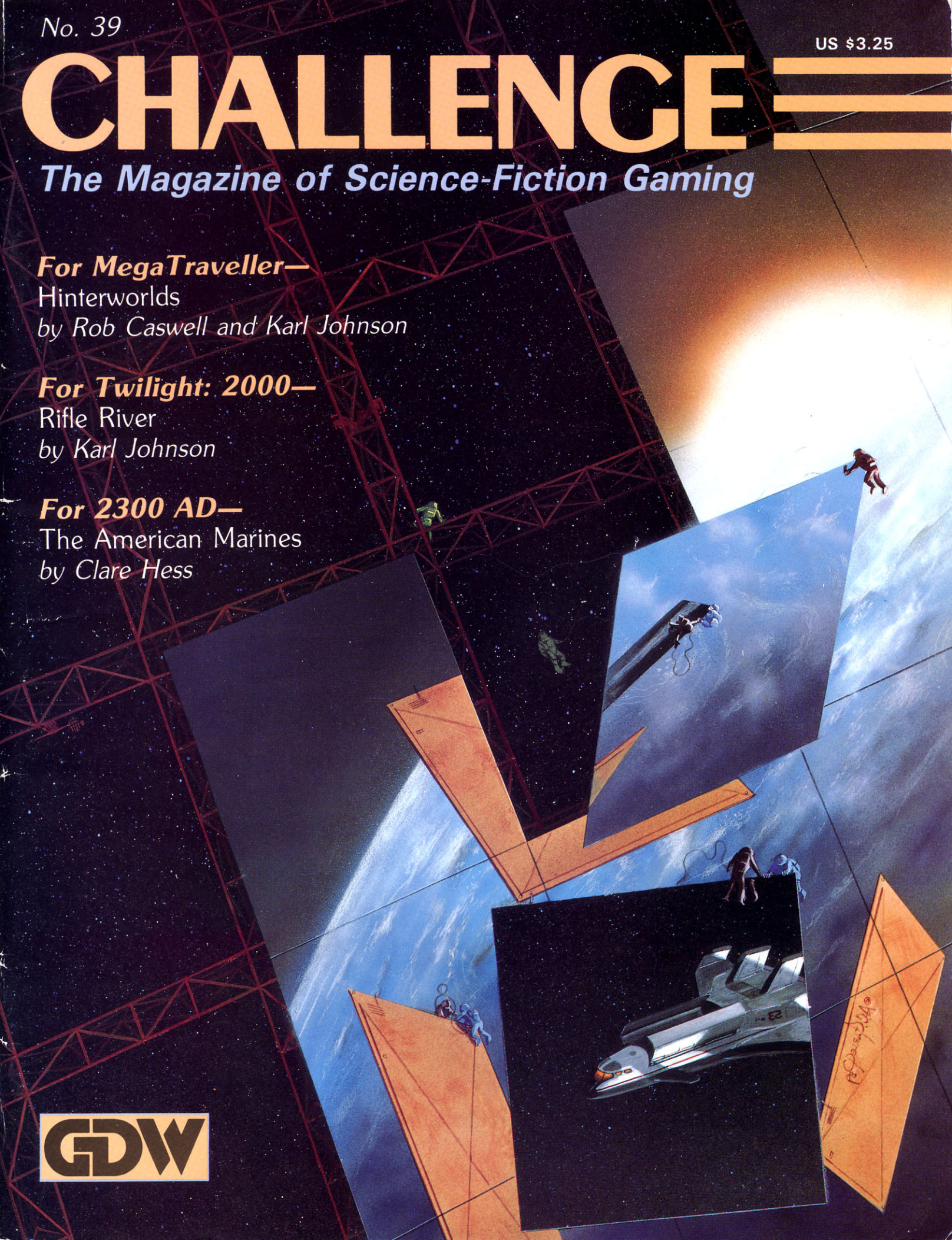
CHALLENGE

The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming

For MegaTraveller—
Hinterworlds
by Rob Caswell and Karl Johnson

For Twilight: 2000—
Rifle River
by Karl Johnson

For 2300 AD—
The American Marines
by Clare Hess



GDW

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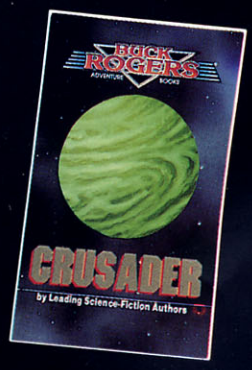
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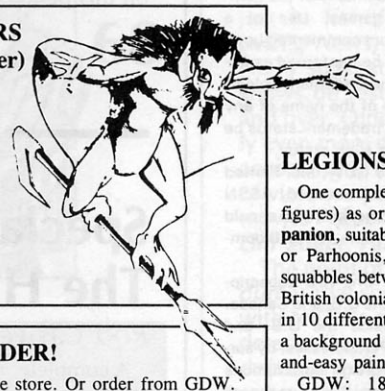


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CHALLENGE 39

The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming

TWILIGHT: 2000

Rifle River 4

Karl Johnson

The Gang of the Gun is the first harbinger of what the tattered remnants of North America fear most—the emergence of cannibalism.

The gang is chewing its way up the coast—and chewing up anything and everything left of civilization along the way. With the help of the coast guard, you must stop this epidemic before it can spread.



SPACE 1889

Ether Ship Etiquette 23

Greg Novak

Learn how the elite conduct themselves while in transit between planets, and the behavior that distinguishes the person of note from the common herd: A guide to interplanetary ether ship etiquette—or getting there is half the fun.

To anyone planning to ship a party off to Mars, it may come as a shock to learn that it takes 70 to 90 days to make the trip. The restriction of a small area which the average interplanetary liner has to offer for such an extended length of time caused some problems on the early voyages of these vessels. To avoid future difficulties of a smiliar type, the companies involved in operating the liners to Mars have evolved an etiquette system that, in itself, provides some interesting background on this period.

MEGATRAVELLER

Special Supplement: The Hinterworlds 29

Rob Caswell and Karl Johnson

A complete, never-before-published sector: The Hinterworlds. Lying on the trailing edge of the Imperium and adjacent to the Old Expanses, the Hinterworlds sector has been an ever-changing backwater throughout its known history. Hundreds of unallied worlds and a fistful of pocket interstellar unities comprise the sector, which has proven to be a ripe birthplace for new life forms and has given rise to eight nonhuman minor races.



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The issue price is $3.25. One-year subscriptions (six issues) are $15 in the U.S. and Canada. Foreign subscriptions (outside the U.S. and Canada, but not to APO or FPO addresses) by surface mail are $30 per year. Foreign subscriptions by air mail are $50 per year. Please make all payments in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank.

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2300AD

The American Marines

C. W. Hess



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By the 23rd century, with America and her colonies located light-years apart, the availability of a well trained, mobile fighting force has become a necessity. When nations were still confined to earth, America employed the RDJTF. Today, a similar organization exists, the ART. Capable of deploying troops anywhere on earth within hours, the ART cannot respond to situations off-world without considerable preparation. Enter the US Marine Corps....

The French Lieutenant's Connection

Marcus L. Rowland



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It sounds like an easy job, though the money isn't particularly good. The task is to escort one Frenchman from Adrian to Premiere and make sure he catches his ship to Earth. What could go wrong?

BATTLETECH™

Sky Eyes

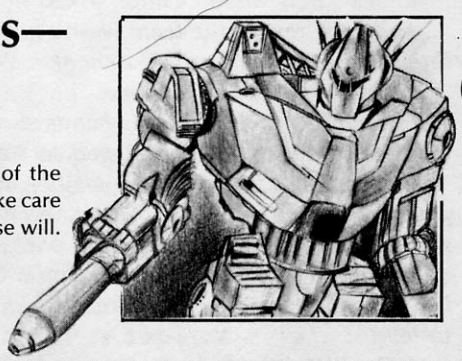
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Dale L. Kemper

The raid on Patinir might have looked like a walk in the park to the guys on the ground, but for the "unappreciated few" who had to dodge everything they could throw, it was tough!

The Waco Rangers—An In-Depth Look

Dale L. Kemper



68

"Strike or Die" is the regimental motto of the Waco Rangers, a group that has learned to take care of its own, because it knows that no one else will.

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MEMO

By: Loren K. Wiseman

From the Management

Part of my job at GDW is to keep track of the various attacks on RPGs that occur from time to time. Some of it makes pretty interesting reading, especially the *NCTV News*, published by the National Coalition on Television Violence, a group that believes using violence to entertain is harmful to the mental health of the observer. NCTV is opposed to RPGs (because they all involve vicarious violence), and maintains a list of deaths, suicides, murders, and other crimes which it claims are linked to playing RPGs. It is entertaining to look at what else NCTV considers harmful, according to the *NCTV News*.

Movies, TV shows, and videos are said to be damaging if they are excessively violent. See if you can guess the name of one film from what NCTV says in a review (*NCTV News*, Vol. 6, No. 6-7): "Intimidating Queen terrorizes all. Drug use includes hallucinogenic mushrooms....Walrus openly smokes opium....Violence is graphic, unneeded and senseless.... (T)he film is *definitely* likely to cause viewers to become more violent" (italics theirs). What is this film? Walt Disney's *Alice in Wonderland!* I'll admit it's been years since I've seen the film, but I can't recall any opium or hallucinogenic mushrooms, let alone anything that could be labeled "graphic, unneeded and senseless" violence. Maybe my brain has been damaged by watching too many cartoons.

Speaking of which, NCTV's monitors report that *Bullwinkle, The Flintstones, Muppet Babies*, and *Smurfs* contain eight or more violent acts per hour. Cartoon violence is stated to be just as harmful as any other kind (*NCTV News*, Vol. 10, No. 3-4), and NCTV suggests that viewing of these shows be restricted to those age 13 and over. Older cartoons are allegedly even more damaging: *Bugs Bunny*, according to NCTV, contains 56 acts of violence per hour, more than the movies *Platoon* (54) and *Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3* (53).

The point of this *reductio ad absurdum* is that something is out of kilter with NCTV's criteria. Their "violence detector" is too sensitive, like a smoke detector that goes off when you take a shower. No one takes them seriously about *Alice in Wonderland*—why take them seriously about RPGs?

Some of the material in this editorial appeared in a slightly different form in a publication called The Assault on Role-Playing Games *published by the Game Manufacturers Association.*

—Loren K. Wiseman

Rifle River

Karl Johnson

The following adventure is for referees and players who have completed The Last Submarine module and remained in North America, or who were not involved in that operation and find themselves on the east coast. "Rifle River" is suitable for a group of any size (with some modifications) but is optimal for a group of four to six players with some strong ties to the military government of the United States. The adventure begins in early October 2001.

BARBARIAN ATTACK

We found him hiding under the passenger platform of the New Haven train station. He was thin as a rail and scared out of his wits.

"Sir, there were hundreds of them...thousands! We tried to withdraw, but they hit the lieutenant, and Sergeant Propitto got cut off. I tried to help him, but I couldn't...there was no way to...I just had to..."

This wasn't going anywhere productive. "Corporal! Report!"

He stopped as though I had slapped him. Then some sanity bled back into his eyes, replacing that hyperactive brightness that precedes hysteria.

Suddenly, he was all business. "Corporal Dusanenko, 78th Light Infantry, Special Operations Team Delta, sir. Sorry, sir....I've—it's been pretty rough, sir."

"I can believe it, son. Tell me what your mission was and what happened."

"Yes sir. We left Fort Dix on September 20, under Lieutenant Baptiste. He was like all of you, sir—a European vet." There was something between awe and fear in his voice.

"Go on, Dusanenko."

"Yes, sir. Well, we had been ordered to get to Hartford and retrieve the dies that we were supposed to find there."

My XO, McGruder, cut in: "Dies?"

"Yes, sir, dies for making M16s—you know, the Colt armory at Hartford. Milgov wanted the dies retrieved and shipped out west. Seems they've got enough manufacturing machinery working to be able to get back in the new parts and repair business."

"So what happened, corporal?"

He fought with a brief resurgence of hysteria before continuing in a carefully controlled fashion.

"Rye train station, two days ago. We were scouting for a bivouac site. I had been sent into town to see if there was anyone there we could barter with, maybe get some info from. Found the town deserted—not a soul. Lots of useful things left lying around. Like everybody had run away from a flood. Should've known something was wrong."

"Next thing I know, it sounds like World War IV back at the train station. Ran back as fast as I could. The lieutenant was already dead, sarge hit, trying to lay down cover fire, but they'd been caught on the tracks. Tried to get into a flanking position, but sarge saw me—waved me off. He knew, sir."

"Knew? Knew what?" Clifton asked from over my shoulder.

"Knew the rest of the team wasn't going to make it," I snapped. "Sorry for the interruption, Corporal Dusanenko. Who did this to your team?"

And then he started to shake.

His teeth chattered, and his hands shook so that he dropped his rifle.

"B-b-b-barbarians," he managed to stammer at me, his eyes losing focus. "L-l-like animals. In uniforms, leather, rags. S-skulls. Bones. Wearing it like j-jewelry. And guns—lots of M16s. Knew what they were doing. Finished the job with butcher knives. Then the big ones, they, they—my god, they..."

Dusanenko turned rapidly away and was convulsed by an attack of dry retching. He hadn't finished his sentence, but we all knew what he had been about to tell us.

McGruder turned to look at me in disbelief, then turned away again. He had gone white as a ghost. "I can't believe it," he muttered to no one in particular. "I just can't..."

*But Dusanenko recovered and fixed him with a withering stare. "They did! And they liked it—*liked *it!"*

FOR THE REFEREE

The characters have encountered Corporal Thomas Dusanenko of Special Operations Team Delta, 78th Light Infantry—the last Milgov unit in the New England/Mid-Atlantic states area. After he has been calmed by the group, he will be able to fill in a few more details.

The group that attacked Team Delta apparently calls itself "The Gang of the Gun." It is the first harbinger of what the tattered remnants of North America fear most—the emergence of cannibalism. Dusanenko heard rumors that such a gang was forming in the North Manhattan/Lower Bronx area over the past six months. Its holy symbol is simply the black silhouette of an M16 on a red field.

As he lay hiding throughout the dusk hours, he learned a few important facts. The gang has obviously grown to an astounding size for these lean times; it has in excess of 500 members, 300 of whom are "combat ready." Perhaps 50 of these individuals are armed with M16s, another 50 with semiautomatic civilian versions (AR-15s), and the remainder with a potpourri of paramilitary weapons and a few high-powered hunting rifles. About half of the "noncombatants" are also armed with guns, which include everything from Ruger Mini-14s to bolt-action .22s. These weapons seem to be in poor repair, however, and the group also seems to be short on ammunition. Most sidearms are backup pieces carried by the best-equipped of the combatants—known as the Mothers of Merciless.

Judging from the snippets of conversation and the rituals that Dusanenko overheard, the gang grew steadily when the Mothers of Merciless began to make "full use" of the bodies of their defeated foes. The gang's leader—a deserter from the 78th by the name of Clyde Morgan—has given this appalling practice a quasi-religious significance, resulting in a strange form of cohesion among the members of the gang. With this gruesome new unity, Morgan has been able to build the rabble-like old gang into the cult-like new Gang of the Gun. The litany is simple: The only law is power, and power is acquired through superior firepower. And the pervasive symbol of that firepower in North America is the M16.

Dusanenko also learned that the gang seems to be in the midst of a migration, or maybe a pilgrimage. The migration aspect seems to be directly due to a food shortage; those neighbors they hadn't already defeated decided to leave the general area in a hurry. As a result, the gang had to leave its turf and travel in search of new foes—and, therefore, new "supplies."

In addition to this eminently practical push, Morgan has given the gang an equally strong pull—the sacred Colt plant at Hartford, which he has built into a mecca for his followers. Dusanenko's guess—borne out by the party's map—is that Morgan intends to take the gang members along the Connecticut coast until they reach New Haven, at which point they'll probably move northward along the New Haven & Hartford rail line. How Morgan hopes to renew M16 production is unknown to Dusanenko; the man is probably just thoroughly insane.

But Dusanenko does know this; the M16 dies are needed out west, where they could become an important factor in Milgov's fight to protect and rebuild one of the few productive regions left in America. He was heading east not only because he was cut off from the route back to Fort Dix; he was also heading toward the only possible Milgov allies left in New England—the reclusive coast guard, rumored to still have a base somewhere south of Boston.

TWILIGHT: 2000

A CIVILIZED DECISION

The characters will quickly realize that despite his shaken condition, Corporal Dusanenko is not about to give up his mission; in fact, he has become something of a fanatic regarding its completion.

Through Dusanenko, the referee should take advantage of the opportunity to impress upon the players that they have a moral, as well as a military, duty to assume responsibility for the mission of the late Team Delta. At least, they should feel a social duty to do something about the Hartford-bound Gang of the Gun. Given the crop failures of the past year and the approaching winter, the gang may flourish at the expense of those civilized enclaves that are still surviving. The gang will probably absorb the more depraved marauder bands as new members. Despite his borderline hysteria, Dusanenko can and will make a compelling case for the elimination of the Gang of the Gun.

Two options will immediately present themselves to the characters: Try to infiltrate the gang and remove its leadership, or try to locate the coast guard with the intent of jointly preparing a large and crippling ambush. Players should quickly see that they simply don't have enough information to make the infiltration option work. And even if they were able to get in close enough, they would never survive the attempt; it would be a suicide mission.

Therefore, the only reasonable option is to locate the coast guard commander and appeal to him for aid.

A WALK ALONG THE SHORE

To the best of Dusanenko's knowledge, the coast guard is rumored to be operating in and around the Rhode Island area, so the group will have to head east. The most logical route is to follow either Interstate 95 or the Amtrak rail line, both of which run very close to the Connecticut coastline.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS

When the characters are in areas other than those detailed in the following section, these encounter charts should be used in determining any unusual occurrences that befall them as they travel. The referee should roll on this general encounter table once every four hours, unless specific rules dictate otherwise. The referee should make a note of any settlements encountered, indicating size and defenses; they may become critical for play purposes in the second half of this adventure.

Optional: The referee might want to use the encounter values

suggested in **Howling Wilderness** instead. The ones included in this adventure, however, are specially designed for coastal travel in fall 2001.

ENCOUNTER TABLE—GENERAL

Die	*Result*
2-4	Animal*
5	Ruins
6	Danger
7-8	Marauders
9	Refugees
10	Abandoned vehicle
11	Hunters/scavengers
12	Farmers/fishermen

*For animals, use the Animal Encounters chart.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Die	*Result*
2-4	Dogs
5-8	Small game/fowl
9-10	Large game/grazer
11	Deer (1-3)
12	Bear (black only)

DESCRIPTIONS

The descriptions which follow apply to the Encounter Table—General.

Ruins: The characters come across the remains of a small community which has been ruined within the past two or three months. The New York-Boston corridor is lined with small, semisuburban communities. Many of these turned to fishing or farming after the period of famine that largely depopulated the area. However, the marauder bands from Fort Devens (former members of the 43rd MP Brigade) have preyed upon and savaged many of these humble villages. In addition, many of those who had staked their hopes on farming have been ruined by the unfavorable weather and have either become hunter/scavengers or marauders.

Danger: The characters encounter a hazardous situation. The nature of this situation must be determined by the referee and must be appropriate to the environment in which the characters are located. This could, therefore, be a collapsing roof in the ruins area, a rabid dog in the country, or a bridge that threatens to collapse while the characters are crossing a river.

Marauders: The characters encounter a band of 2D6+1 marauders. These NPCs are bandits who survive by pillage and murder. They will attempt to attack from ambush, and they prefer superior numbers. Marauder bands consist of a mix of Novice, Experienced, and Veteran NPCs.

Half of all such encounters will be with former members of the 43rd MP Brigade. If such a band is encountered, it will be a foraging/raiding party away from the main group. The main group will number between 15 and 40: (1D6+2)×5. They will be armed with military personal arms, and will perhaps possess one or two heavy weapons (either machineguns or mortars).

Refugees: These are the survivors from those towns which have recently become ruins (see above). They generally have few possessions and will flee any contact. However, offers of food, medical supplies, or weapons might get them to stay and talk for awhile. If they have been victimized by a marauder band made up of former 43rd MP Brigade members, they will not stop to talk under any circumstances if the characters are in uniform. If a victimized refugee group is armed, a one-third chance exists that they will try to snipe at the group from long range. Refugee groups are comprised of Novice and Experienced NPCs.

Abandoned Vehicle: The group encounters an abandoned motor vehicle. It will have been stripped of almost all useful equipment. All man-portable items will certainly have been removed.

Hunters/Scavengers: The characters encounter 1D6 civilian hunters (local men and women armed with sporting rifles, shotguns, or bows). They will be suspicious of strangers, especially those who appear to be in uniform or part of a marauder gang. Offers to trade ammunition or food for information, however, will usually be cautiously accepted. These people will have permanent homes one-third of the time. They will not injure other people except in self-defense. The group consists of a mix of Novice, Experienced, and Veteran NPCs.

Farmers/Fishermen: The characters encounter 1D6 farmers or fishermen. If the characters have surprise, they may be able to get close enough to meet farmers who are working in the fields. Otherwise, the farmers' lookout will ring a gong upon spotting the party (assuming that the party is at least five in number and armed). The farmers will then run to a single house of stone or brick construction and prepare to defend it. Most of the communities are 2D6×5 in number, although some larger ones exist. In the field, the characters will meet 1D6 farmers. Little or no food is for sale. The farmers will be armed with shotguns, hunting rifles, or paramilitary arms. Their farming situation is good, since they get a fair amount of coastal rain. However, they have heard horror stories from the interior.

In the case of a fishing community, the fishermen will be at the waterfront tending their boats and will be nearly impossible to surprise, since the boats are within 30 meters of the town and its lookout post (the highest point in town). The fishermen are a little less suspicious and will send a parley group to see what the characters want. They do have a little food to sell but for exorbitant prices. If the characters indicate that they are with Milgov, they may receive an offer to provide protection against the United Brotherhood of Former Marines who occasionally come by and extort some supplies.

THE CITIES

As the group begins its journey east, it will make fair time along the roads. Even so, the characters will only be able to make 70 percent of their listed on-road speed due to the terrible conditions of the road. Not only have the winters been severe, but the movement of heavy tracked vehicles to and from transatlantic shipping ports has churned the pavement into a tarry ruin.

However, the biggest delays they'll experience will be passing through (or, to be safer, around) the larger urban centers that dot the Connecticut coast. They'll run into most of these built-up areas in the first half of their journey. The worst are Bridgeport and New Haven, with lesser (but considerable) difficulties being offered by Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, and New London. In each of these areas, the streets are choked with

debris, and there is a one-third chance every hour for an encounter with a marauding gang. Additionally, any encounters with animals or farmers automatically become an encounter with a sizable pack of wild dogs, some of which may be rabid. Any encounter with hunters is actually an encounter with a group of well armed hunter/scavengers working for the UBF. If they can surprise the party, they may try to pressure them into giving up some equipment as a "highway tax." They'll run from superior firepower, but they're not afraid of a fairly even fight if there's a chance for good loot.

In general, it is safer to move around rather than through these ruined cities, but that involves trying to follow outdated local maps (if any are available) over a confused matrix of back roads. While this is safer, it is much more time-consuming (on the average, add four hours).

NEW HEARSAY AT OLD SAYBROOK

When the characters reach Old Saybrook, they will spot a group of six individuals ahead of them, on foot but making steady progress eastward. Closer inspection or binoculars will reveal a surprising fact; they're members of the Gang of the Gun.

If these six are captured or followed, the same thing will be discovered; their mission is to assess the condition of the bridge over the Connecticut River. If they are killed outright, the characters will have nothing more than a puzzle; why are Gang of the Gun members scouting a path this far south of Hartford?

However, if the group manages to capture one or all of the gang members, it is an ESY interrogation task to get them tangled up in their own clumsy lies, and thereby get the truth out of them by playing one against the other.

In fact, this team of gang members is trailblazing for the gang itself, which is intending to head north to Hartford by way of the Connecticut River. They, however, call it "Rifle River." Morgan has renamed it, since it flows past Hartford (Colt), Springfield (Springfield and Smith & Wesson), and nearby

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Chicopee Falls (Remington). Morgan and his "preacher," the Right Out Right Rev. Richard Q. Starkey, seem sure that enough boats are available nearby to make the river voyage—and besides, it's a religious pilgrimage. It's only fitting that the Rifle River be the "highway of their *hegira*," rather than the infinitely more mundane overland route. The characters will also learn from the prisoner(s) who the key people are in the gang, what Morgan looks for in recruits, and how the gang is organized. This provides the group members with enough information to allow them to consider an infiltration option as part of their eventual plan. (The characters can and will learn many more specific details from the prisoners later in this adventure.)

However, these six gang members are not about to surrender calmly. Half are Veteran NPCs armed with M16s; the other half are Experienced NPCs with AR-15s. They all have sidearms of one type or another, and the leader has two fragmentation grenades and a kevlar jacket. The Veterans will attempt to fight to the death, whereas the Experienced NPCs might surrender and are likely to do so if all the Veterans are eliminated. If there are more than six party members, increase the number of gang members accordingly.

MYSTIC MYSTERIES

As the characters pass through Mystic, near the Rhode Island border, it will be obvious that this once quaint, little, historic town is the current equivalent of a minor metropolis. With a population of almost 5000, Mystic supports a vigorous fishing industry, as well as some coastal trade. Much of this is due



to the contributions of the former employees of the Mystic Seaport and Marine Museum, who have kept the *Charles W. Morgan*, America's last wooden whaling ship, in operating condition. They have also managed to convert the other sailing craft in port into highly profitable fishing/merchant vessels, and they have an ambitious educational program for transmitting special maritime skills to an ever-increasing number of their young people. Not surprisingly, Mystic is particularly well defended, boasting several M60 machineguns and a pair of 81mm mortars, in addition to the more predictable selection of military, paramilitary, and sporting longarms. It maintains a low-power radio station for emergency broadcasts to its populace and for long-range contact with the rest of the world.

In Mystic, the characters will find a welcome change from the harsh realities of the road. Smiles come freely, trade is possible, and for a night at least, they may relax and enjoy a bit of civilization once again. Or so they think. The referee should urge the characters to visit the wharfside Mystic Inn, where they can enjoy a fine meal—along with a young-but-pleasing wine of local vintage—as long as they check their weapons at the door. Here, in the midst of what passes for paradise in the year 2001, one of the characters will overhear a somewhat tipsy gentleman at an adjacent table joking about "those United Brotherhood of Fishermen clods." He will laughingly suggest that they have a lot of ambition but not much courage. Not enough, anyway, to take on Mystic and her mystical guardian angel.

An alert character will note that most patrons smile good-naturedly but tightly and do their best to quiet their inebriated neighbor. However, three men at the bar—travellers themselves—will take a keen interest in the man's words. And when the jolly Mysticite finally takes his leave of the inn, they will pay their tab hastily—*in gold*—and leave as well, without stopping to pick up any weapons.

If the characters rush out without reclaiming their weapons (which would take some time), they'll see the three men meet with a fourth, who passes out weapons. It will be an AVG:RCN task to avoid being seen and DIF:RCN to be able to identify the weapons (two mini-Uzis and two Ruger P-85 9mm automatic pistols). Once armed, the four men will overtake the vocal Mysticite and hustle him into an alley, where he will be silenced with a sharp jab to his fair-sized solar plexus.

If the characters do stop to get their weapons, they will just be able to catch up to the four men as they are apprehending the portly local. If the characters have a tremendous superiority in firepower, the strangers will use the local as a hostage and withdraw to the pier, where they will get into a small methanol-fueled powerboat. They'll dump their prisoner overboard once they're 100 meters from shore. The characters will have to rescue that fellow by swimming, since no other powerboats are available nearby. It will be an AVG:SWM task to get to him (cold water with a current) and an additional AVG:SWM task to rescue him. Additional rescuers will help the odds. Also, if one rescuer swims out to get him, it is an ESY:SWM task to keep him afloat long enough for someone to grab a dinghy, row out, and lend a hand.

If, however, the characters catch the four abductors by surprise and attack, they will engage in a considerable firefight. The four men are Veteran NPCs and will fight with uncommon determination and discipline. In the firefight, roll for every missed shot that was aimed at a target within two meters of the local; there is a one-sixth chance that it will hit the fellow (caught in the crossfire).

In the wake of the encounter, the characters may learn the following things.

If they have the opportunity to search any of the four abductors, they will discover New America identity papers. They will not discover any mission orders, but they *will* find a map of the nearby town of Waterford (approximately eight miles to the west) and the surrounding area. A close inspection will reveal that the map includes a small symbol indicating the location of the three Millstone nuclear plants.

If the group members manage to rescue the hapless Mysticite, they will find him to be a grateful and loquacious ally. The mystical guardian angel to which he referred is Mystic's secret insurance policy—the cooperation of the coast guard. In fact, the guard loaned Mystic the M60s and mortars 18 months ago in exchange for the loan of the *Australia*, the historic schooner that had been part of the seaport exhibition. If the group expresses a keen interest in the coast guard, the local will confess he doesn't know where the main base is located, but he thinks he knows a way to put the group members in touch with someone who does. He tells them to be at the inn the next night.

ANOTHER CUP OF TEA?

When the group members are at the inn on the following night, they will have a long wait—made pleasant by several urns of complimentary tea. However, when one of the characters finally must excuse himself and use the facilities, an individual will emerge from one of the stalls. He will take the player prisoner at gunpoint.

A minute after that player has left the table, a pleasant-featured young man will saunter over to the group's table and inform the remaining members not to worry—their friend has been detained and is unharmed, and will remain that way, if the group has a good reason to be interested in the location of the coast guard base.

What transpires next is up to the characters. Basically, honesty is the best policy, since their contact, Sam Carlowe, has INT: 65 and will probably know a lie when he hears one. If, however, the characters are honest about their origin, their mission, and their plan, he will agree that they should have an opportunity to talk with the CO of the coast guard. Pursuant to that, he tells the group members that he'll set out with them tomorrow and guide them the rest of the way.

SWAB SANCTUARY

The characters have a little travel left ahead of them. Their newfound guide will remain silent as they continue west on Interstate 95, but will signal them to turn onto the Route 1/Jamestown bridge exit. At this point, the characters will seemingly switch back and forth over a confused tangle of two-lane roads, and at the end of the day, will find themselves approaching the Jamestown Bridge. As they drive further out onto the (suspiciously?) well maintained suspension bridge, an alert character will detect two jeeps emerging from a garage alongside the tollbooths they just passed. The spotting task is AVG:RCN. These jeeps swing onto the bridge behind them. A few seconds later, the characters at the front of the party

will note two similar vehicles ahead of them about two-thirds of the way over the span. At this point, Sam will turn toward the characters with a faintly apologetic smile and suggest that the characters prepare to check their weapons; they're about to enter the coast guard country.

The group has arrived at the Newport, Rhode Island coast guard enclave, which is centered in the compound that was once the domain of the Naval War College and Naval Officer Candidate School, among other important navy institutions. Ensign Sam Carlowe, who was encountered by the group while undercover in Mystic, Connecticut, has secured safe passage into the compound, where they have made their case before Rear Admiral Nils Holsgirder, the commandant of the coast guard.

Holsgirder, despite being a crusty and often cantankerous old bird, agrees with the group that the Gang of the Gun must be stopped, regardless of the M16 dies. Normal pillage and rapine notwithstanding, he feels that the deviant behavior of the Mothers of Merciless must be eliminated as quickly and finally as possible.

THE COAST GUARD

The motto of the coast guard, "Semper Paratus," translates as "Always Ready." That motto—and the frame of mind that goes with it—has much to do with the coast guard's survival into and through the year 2001.

Several factors conspired to produce an unusually well equipped coast guard just prior to World War III. The key element was the intensified war the US government had begun to wage against extranational drug smugglers and suppliers. By 1990, it was realized that until educational and countermotivational approaches could shift America's youth away from drugs and toward more productive interests, the immediate answer lay in cutting off the supply. Extraterritorial actions, while frequently very successful, created international incidents—an increasing trend, as the drug kingpins of South and Central America began to blend in with national governments in those regions. The next—and the last—bulwark available to the government was to stop the drugs before or at the border. This resulted in a beefed-up coast guard, which saw its responsibilities expand to include air intercept, tracking, and maritime patrol duties.

The onset of global war in 1995 saw the coast guard transferred to the command of the secretary of the navy, and when US forces became directly involved in the conflict, a full 98 percent of the coast guard's personnel, vessels, and planes were committed to wartime duty. At first, this duty was largely restricted to defensive operations in North America,



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but after the North Sea meat grinder of 1997, these coast guard vessels and crews were absorbed directly into the navy and began assuming an important role in foreign operations. Years passed, and the toll on these personnel and ships was high.

However, the coast guard did not cease to exist as a distinct entity in 1997. Instead, using the two percent of personnel remaining as a cadre, the guard inducted a large number of the coast guard auxiliary—a citizen's group that assists the guard—into a crash training program, mostly run by reactivated guard reservists.

At this time Nils Holsgirder was breveted to rear admiral and put in charge as commandant of the coast guard. Seeing the worsening food situation in the northeast and anticipating the inevitable decay of larger urban centers, Holsgirder wisely opted to shift the remaining coast guard assets into bases in smaller, more manageable areas. He also began converting his few remaining powered vessels into alcohol burners and reinstated sailed vessels into active duty.

After Washington and Annapolis were hit by nuclear strikes, the Naval Academy briefly relocated to Newport, Rhode Island, home of the Naval War College and OCS program. With its combat-ready resources already stretched thin, the navy assigned Holsgirder the duty of providing local security and defense for the new Naval Academy. Holsgirder welcomed the assignment; Newport was a perfect base of operations and very likely to last through the dark ages he saw on the horizon. He began shifting his assets out of bases on Cape Cod and Maine, and reorganizing them into a full-time fighting force at Newport.

Eventually, the Naval Academy relocated to Newport News, Virginia. Holsgirder took the opportunity to attempt to shift some of his upper-echelon training staff from the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut, to Newport, but the navy would not give him the go-ahead to move everything, wanting to keep the institution on the Connecticut coast as a support arm of the naval facilities at Groton.

When the food riots in New England broke out and the Groton/New London complexes were ruined, Holsgirder chose to adopt a very low profile, including a

faked "withdrawal" from Newport. He began to note the rise of Carlucci and the UBF, and correctly reasoned that if the coast guard was perceived as being strong enough to present a threat, then Carlucci would feel it necessary to eliminate it.

Consequently, Holsgirder put Newport under a travel "quarantine"; no one gets in or out without Holsgirder's express personal consent. Since Newport is, in fact, an island with a limited number of access points, this was not too difficult to achieve, particularly given the superior firepower at his disposal. As a result, Newport is something of a quiet mystery, with a rumor running that the natives kill any visitors on sight.

However, Governor Britt of the Rhode Island Isolationist community is aware of Holsgirder, and something of an unspoken arrangement exists between them. Britt leaves Newport in peace and facilitates a limited amount of trade with the Isolationist community, while Holsgirder's force is his insurance against Carlucci's ambition. Although not large enough to defeat Carlucci, Holsgirder's swabs could deal the UBF a severe, perhaps crippling, blow in a fight to the finish.

Holsgirder is also worried about attracting the attention of New America, which he fears as much or more than Carlucci—hence, his interest in the four New American agents encountered in Mystic, who seemed to feel it was important to learn as much as they could about the town's mystical guardian angel. The fewer clues they have, the better.

Holsgirder's long-term plan is basic and well considered. Using his older reservists, he's educating a new class of recruits, many of whom were orphaned by the events of the past four years. By providing expert rescue and security services, the new guard makes it possible for the sizable fleet at Newport to pursue more aggressive fishing practices and to range further than its competitors. Meanwhile, Holsgirder is trying to promote the growth of light industry, with an eye toward opening some limited maritime trade with the coastal communities to the south (i.e., away from the UBF stomping grounds). His guess is that Carlucci's regime—being built on internal terror and ruthlessness—will eventually destabilize and consume itself. If Holsgirder and Newport can grow quietly and steadily until then, they might be able to reintroduce some vestiges of civilization into the surrounding area.

THE NEW COAST GUARD

The new coast guard is a mix of the old and the young. The officers and NCOs are all 40 or more years old; they are reactivated reservists, former academy instructors, and coast guard auxiliary inductees. Most of them (about 200 strong) have seen limited combat and are either Experienced or Veteran NPCs. They serve as commanders, shore party leaders, teachers for new recruits, repair overseers, and foremen—a busy life.

The new swab class is mostly comprised of 16 to 19 year olds, many of whom were without family or friends when Holsgirder's new coast guard offered them an alternative to the "howling wilderness" that America is turning into. Much more than a pack of would-be professional soldiers, they are trained in those humane duties that have characterized the coast guard since its inception: search and rescue, emergency medical care, techniques for evacuation, and water safety instruction. They are either Novice or Experienced NPCs with a tremendous sense of espirit de corps. Almost 400 of these new swabs make up the rank and file of the new coast guard.

The townspeople of Newport (approximately 9000 of them) are mostly involved in fishing, light industry, and light farming. All people above the age of 13 are required to attend four hours of militia training every week and two full weeks of intensive training every year (usually during the winter). Enough longarms are available to arm about half these people with something more effective than a .22. Handguns are not prevalent.

The coast guard itself is armed with M16s and M60s. A few mortars are available, as are a number of M2HB .50 calibers. Body armor is somewhat rare, most of it being ballistic cloth vests, courtesy of commandeered police stores.

COAST GUARD NAVAL ASSETS

Holsgirder wasn't left with much when the navy yanked almost every seaworthy vessel out from under him in 1997. However, the commandant is a tireless and resourceful worker, and the new flotilla is a direct product of his industry. The primary assets are as follows.

- 1 medium-endurance cutter, *Chilula*, WMEC-153.
- 1 small harbor tug, *Shackle*, WYTL-65609.*
- 1 inland buoy tender, *Elderberry*, WLI-65401.*
- 10 coastal utility craft.*
- 1 sail training cutter, *Eagle*, WIX-327.
- 1 large schooner (auxiliary), *Australia*, WIX-999.*
- 20 sailed sloops (auxiliary), various, various.
- 1 HH-52A Seaguard helicopter.*

*Not available for game purposes, so data is not given.

SEMPER PARATUS

Ever since Europe, I guess I haven't been very easily impressed. Dodging nukes, staying alive in farming cantonments—I guess it can jade even the most ingenuous individual—which I never was. But Holsgirder made an impression on me and the rest of my team. The sea salt had etched its way into his craggy features and high cheekbones. Behind those leathery promontories, two ice-blue eyes glittered, idling in neutral—right between mirth and lightning rage. This was a man you didn't mess with.

He heard our story through and fixed those ice-chips on me. "Okay, you've picked up a mission that wasn't yours. Damn patriotic, I guess. Maybe it was damn stupid. What do you think?" I wasn't in the mood to dance. "Sir, all due respect to flag and country and all that, but I don't give a tinker's damn whether it seems patriotic. That gang is chewing its way up the coast—and chewing up anything and everything left of civilization along the way."

"Calm down, captain, calm down." His eyes went back to a dull burn; he was playing with me. "It's my general policy to wait for direct orders from the navy or Colorado Springs. If I were to lend a hand to every Milgov sad sack, I'd be history by now." I started to get up. "Sit down, captain. I'm not through. This time, captain— for the same reasons you did—I'm going to make an exception."

Chilula

Cherokee-class medium endurance cutter, WMEC-153.

Builder: Charleston Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., Charleston, SC.

Commissioned: April 5, 1945.

Displacement: 1,731 tons full load.

Dimensions (ft): 205 × 38.5 × 17.

Main Machinery: Diesel electric (converted to alcohol), four General Motors diesels, one shaft.

Speed: 8.1 knots.

Range: 1400 miles.

Complement: 72 (seven officers).

Guns: One USN three-inch (76mm), two M2HB MG (retrofitted).

Radar: Raytheon SPS 64, I band (navigation only).

The *Chilula* started out life as a steel-hulled navy tug, but was transferred to the coast guard as a cutter in 1969. She was scheduled to be decommissioned in 1990, but the increase in coast guard responsibilities caused a delay in plans. After some minor refitting, the *Chilula* was retained in the duty roster, mostly as a reserve and training vessel.

She should have been finally decommissioned in 1996, but the onset of the war did away with those plans. She was then the only tub left to Holsgirder that even vaguely resembled a fighting ship. To make matters worse, the navy didn't take the *Chilula* because it felt the cutter would eat up far too many maintenance hours that could be used to keep truly reliable ships up to snuff. Holsgirder has since lovingly seen to the *Chilula*'s rebirth, although she is still a something of a "maintenance hog."

Eagle

Sail training cutter class, WIX-327.

Builder: Blohm & Voss, Hamburg, Germany.

Launched: 1936.

USCG Commissioned: July 1946.

Displacement: 1,784 tons.

Dimensions (ft): 295 (231 at waterline) × 39.1 × 17.

Main Machinery: Two V6s which have been converted to alcohol for electricity.

Speed: 18 knots.

Range: Unlimited.

Complement: 245.

Guns: Two M2HB HMG, two M60 MG (all retrofitted).

Radar: Raytheon SPS 64, I band.

The history of the *Eagle* is a story in itself. Originally a training ship for the German navy, this sail training cutter was taken over at Bremerhaven in the year 1946. Since that time, the *Eagle* has received excellent care and frequent overhauls, since she is the only sailed training vessel which is available to the coast guard.

Holsgirder has opted to forego the use of the MAN auxiliary diesel and the single shaft. His attitude is that the fewer engines he has to convert, maintain, and fuel, the better. And after all, this *Eagle* has big white wings of her own. While not appearing as part of the ship's armament, there are deck braces for mortars.

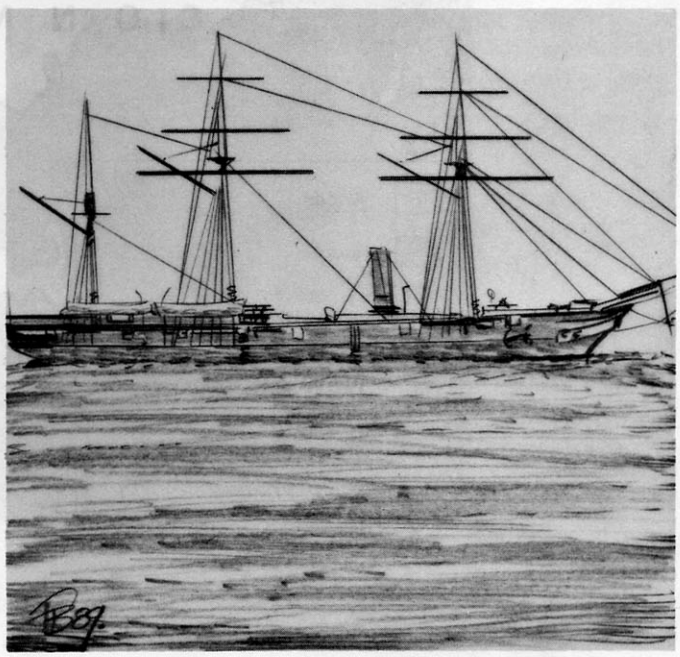
Sailed Sloops

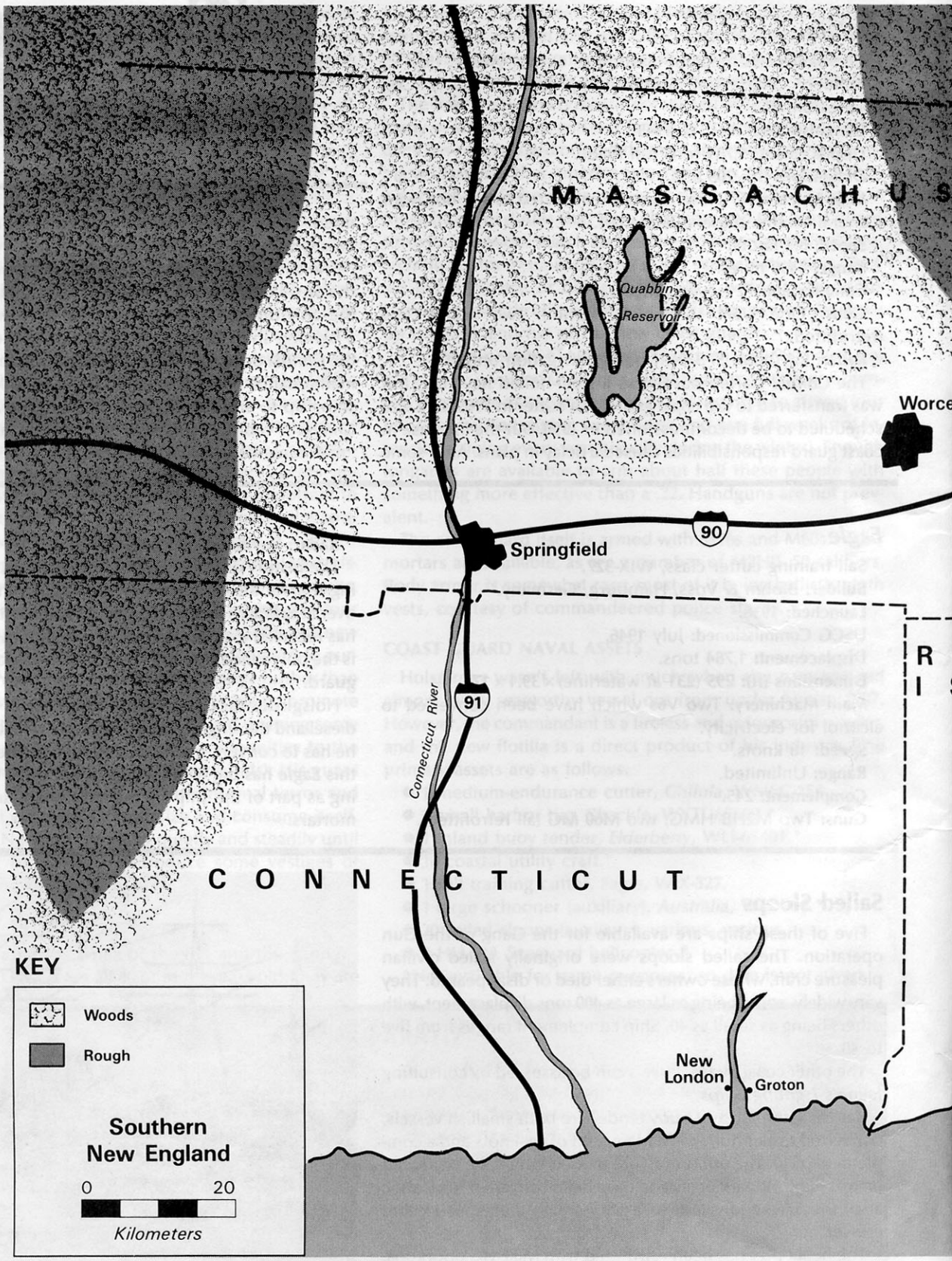
Five of these ships are available for the Gang of the Gun operation. The sailed sloops were originally sailed civilian pleasure craft, whose owners either died or disappeared. They vary widely, some being as large as 400 tons displacement, with others being as small as 40. Ship complement ranges from five to 40.

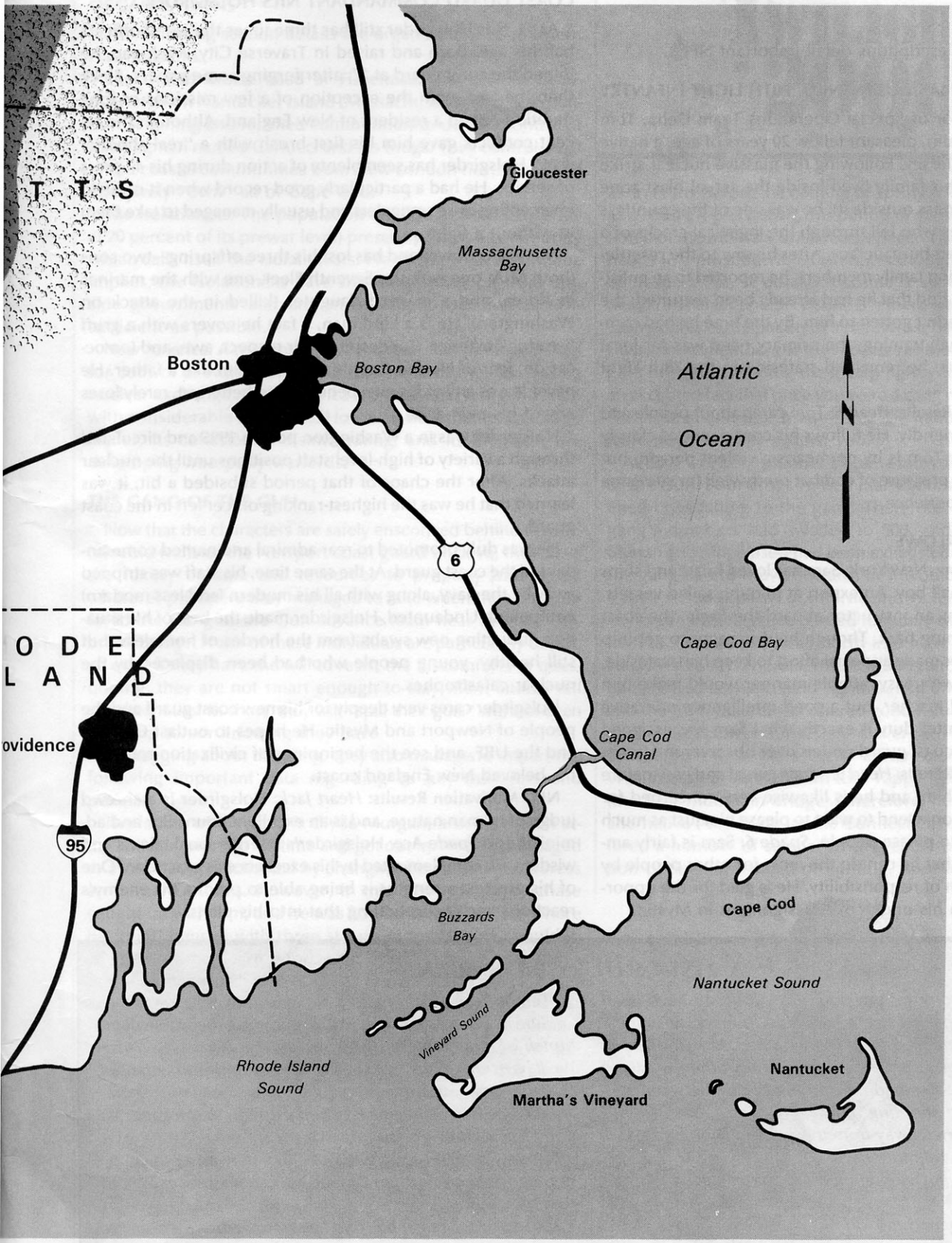
The other coast guard vessels can be assessed by consulting *Jayne's Fighting Ships*.

Basically, the tug and buoy tender are both smallish vessels, converted to alcohol, with a top speed of six knots and a complement of 10. The utility craft are models which are produced en masse by Monark boats and have been converted to alcohol; also, they are equivalent to a very small, high-speed cabin cruiser.

The helicopter has been retrofitted with M60 MG doorguns. Holsgirder's last avgas is stored in deep vaults, and under *no* circumstances short of an all-out attack on Newport itself would he let this bird get airborne. It's the ace up his sleeve, and he won't show it unless he has to.




M A S S A C H U S
Quabbin Reservoir
Worce
90
Springfield
91
Connecticut River
C O N N E C T I C U T
R
I
KEY
Woods
Rough
Southern New England
0
20
Kilometers
New London
Groton


T T S
Gloucester
Massachusetts Bay
Boston
Boston Bay
Atlantic Ocean
N
6
O D E
L A N D
ovidence
95
Cape Cod Bay
Cape Cod Canal
Cape Cod
Buzzards Bay
Nantucket Sound
Vineyard Sound
Rhode Island Sound
Martha's Vineyard
Nantucket

Personalities

The following descriptions detail important NPCs.

CORPORAL THOMAS DUSANENKO, 78TH LIGHT INFANTRY

The sole survivor of Special Operations Team Delta, Tom Dusanenko is a calm, pleasant fellow 20 years of age, a native of Camden, New Jersey. Following the massive nuclear strike on Philadelphia (his family lived inside the actual blast zone but owned a business outside it), he was one of the countless homeless refugees who fell through the logistical cracks of a shattered American bureaucracy. After he saw to the resettlement of his surviving family members, he reported to an enlistment post only to find that he had already been recruited; the paperwork just hadn't gotten to him. By the time he had completed his (minimal) training, the primary need was for local security, and, thus, he remained stateside in the 78th Light Infantry.

NPC Motivation Results: *Heart 5:* Tom cares about people and is generally very friendly. He follows his conscience as closely as he can. *Club 2:* Tom is by no means a violent person, but he can handle the pressure of combat pretty well for someone of his modest experience.

ENSIGN SAM CARLOWE

A native of Albany, New York, Sam has loved boats and ships since he was a small boy. An expert at piloting sailed vessels, he was assigned as an instructor aboard the *Eagle*, the coast guard's large training bark. Though he was eager to get into the war, Holsgirder made a special effort to keep him stateside, seeing that Carlowe's easy, affable manner would make him not only a natural teacher, but a good intelligence operative in a pinch. That latter duty is exactly what Sam was assigned to, becoming the coast guard undercover observer in Mystic.

NPC Motivation Results: *Heart 9:* Sam's genial and easy nature make others like him, and he is likewise very concerned for his fellow man. People tend to want to please him just as much as he likes to try to please people. *Spade 6:* Sam is fairly ambitious and feels that he can do the most for other people by being in a position of responsibility. He is glad for the opportunity to work on his undercover assignment in Mystic.

COAST GUARD COMMANDANT NILS HOLSGIRDER

At 64, Nils Holsgirder still has three times the wit of officers half his age. Born and raised in Traverse City, Michigan, he joined the coast guard at 17, after forging some papers. Since then, he has—with the exception of a few missions of long duration—been a resident of New England. Although the recent conflicts gave him his first brush with a "real shootin' war," Holsgirder has seen plenty of action during his 47 years of service. He had a particularly good record when it came to intercepting drug smugglers and usually managed to take them in without a fight.

Nils is a widower and has lost his three offspring—two sons (both MIA, one with the Seventh Fleet, one with the marines in Korea) and a married daughter (killed in the attack on Washington). He is a kind man, a fact he covers with a gruff "seadog" exterior. But despite their respect, awe, and (on occasion) fear of Holsgirder, his men love him like a father. He never leaves any of his own behind—and better yet, rarely loses any of his own at all.

Holsgirder was in a Washington post in 1995 and circulated through a variety of high-level staff positions until the nuclear attacks. After the chaos of that period subsided a bit, it was learned that he was the highest-ranking officer left in the coast guard.

He was duly promoted to rear admiral and named commandant of the coast guard. At the same time, his staff was stripped away by the navy, along with all his modern (and less modern) equipment. Undaunted, Holsgirder made the best of his situation, inducting new swabs from the hordes of homeless, but still healthy, young people who had been displaced by the nuclear catastrophes.

Holsgirder cares very deeply for his new coast guard and the people of Newport and Mystic. He hopes to outlast Carlucci and the UBF, and see the beginnings of civilization return to his beloved New England coast.

NPC Motivation Results: *Heart Jack:* Holsgirder is a shrewd judge of human nature, and is an excellent counselor and administrator. *Spade Ace:* Holsgirder's interpersonal talents and wisdom are complemented by his excellence as a tactician. One of his greatest strengths is being able to predict his enemy's reactions and incorporating that into his plans.

A 21ST-CENTURY BARBARIAN

I almost felt sorry for the poor guy. Couldn't have been more than 18, shaking like a leaf, cold, hungry, desperate. But then I remembered what his gang had done to the rest of Tom Dusanenko's squad. And how the Mothers of Merciless had "finished" the job. I couldn't decide between spitting on him and shooting him.

Holsgirder leaned away from the kid and shook his head. "Lock him up," he muttered.

"I think we've got everything we're going to get out of this one."

As Clifton marched the kid out, Holsgirder pulled his .45 and hefted it contemplatively as he watched the young monster walk back to his cell.

"Tempting, isn't it?" I asked him. He gave me a long stare.

"Sure is. But he's just one. We've got to get the whole damn bunch of 'em. Can't let this spread. Like a disease. Worse. We'll have enough trouble this winter, without someone putting this crazy idea into starving people's heads. It's going to take one hell of an attack to break up this damn gang. We don't even know where to catch them."

I knew I'd regret saying it, but I did anyway. "Maybe we don't have to catch them. Maybe we can lead them right into a trap."

McGruder's eyes got big, and he swallowed. "You're crazy." Holsgirder just kept looking at me.

"You see," I confessed, "I've got a plan...."

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ORGANIZATIONS

The following section details the organizations of southern New England.

The United Brotherhood of Fishermen: The UBF is headquartered on Nantucket Island (Massachusetts), and is a coalition of fishing and fortified communities under the control of a strongman named Carlucci and his thugs. They control most of the coastal communities from New London northward and effectively "own" all of Cape Cod.

The Isolationists: The population of Rhode Island (currently at 20 percent of its prewar level) presently forms a community which calls itself the Isolationists. Practicing what their name implies, the Isolationists have shut themselves off from outside governments and are attempting to become as self-sufficient as possible.

New America: A reactionary fifth column that has made a bid for control of North America in the wake of the devastating nuclear exchange, New America is a near-fascist organization with considerable resources. However, now that it has lost its leader, its cohesion is disintegrating, and its members are developing into petty warlords.

THE GANG OF THE GUN

Now that the characters are safely ensconced behind the formidable walls of the Newport coast guard enclave, they have the luxury of time and resources to properly interrogate whatever prisoners they managed to take when they encountered the Gang of the Gun advance team near the Old Saybrook Bridge. None of these individuals are particularly bright, so even if they have the will to resist the discomforts of questioning, they are not smart enough to stay silent and/or tell consistent lies. In short, they will "spill their guts" without even meaning to—or knowing they have.

In bragging about the gang, they also manage to impart the following important data regarding its key members and policies.

The leader of the gang is Clyde Morgan, a street-urchin army enlistee who did his time and got out in 1992. He managed to avoid being reactivated by changing his name and address a number of times. However, in mid-1998, the paper chase caught up with him, and he was hauled off to Fort Dix, where he found himself with three stripes pinned to his shoulder. Despite his mediocre prior service record, he at least *had* a prior service record. He was duly made a training squad leader in the 78th Light Infantry.

His unit should have deployed overseas, but due to shipping losses, this never occurred. Instead, he was part of the disastrous trans-Manhattan "gold shipment" fiasco that almost destroyed the 78th. One of the betrayers of that operation, he took his cut and faded into the anonymity of the ruined Bronx. There, along with a number of ex-military and ex-security personnel, he built the core of a very unusual gang: a surgical strike team for hire. By remaining small, lethal, and apolitical, Morgan's group thrived while the other Manhattan power centers were busy chipping away at each others' already crumbling resources.

The winter of 2000-2001 largely finished off what was left of Manhattan and its power centers. Food reserves dwindled, and, except for a few isolated communities, the city had died out as an entity before the coming of spring. Morgan's gang grew as a result. It was during this period of starvation and desperation that the Mothers of Merciless began changing their dietary habits in a most horrible fashion. Although it began as an act of desperation, it quickly became a symbol of the gang's deadliness and general "badness"; there was nothing that they didn't dare. Participation in a ritual feast became the initiation rite for new members of the Mothers of Merciless—the shared guilt of the act binding the group tightly together. It became an accepted fact that once you were a gang member, your hand was against all other men—since the hands of all other men were now certainly against you.

As 2001 wore on, plunder became more sparse for the Gang of the Gun. Poor crops ruined many communities, the weakened ones falling to the gang. Therefore, by September the gang's numbers had swollen to 500, and all nearby prey—human and otherwise—had been exhausted. Morgan knew that the gang had to move onward, or it would consume itself in a final vicious spasm of internecine violence.

Morgan's intelligence offered him only two reasonable alternatives. One was to head north into New York, up the Hudson River Valley. There, fertile lowlands and a high water table had allowed farms to yield significant (if unspectacular) crops, and the Adirondacks still offered good fishing and hunting opportunities. However, the means over the Hudson River to the prosperous west bank were either blocked (the George Washington Bridge), blown (the Tappan Zee Bridge), or held (the Bear Mountain Bridge). Therefore, he chose the second alternative—the route up the Connecticut coastline, which offered a number of smaller fishing communities with a tradition of fleeting instead of fighting. And, of course, that was



the path to Hartford and the Colt plant—home of the M16.

Currently, the gang is some 500 strong. Only 50 children (less than 12 years old) are in the gang. Not surprisingly, these young members are arguably the most ruthless and socially deviant of the bunch; they have made the true transition back to barbarity since they have never known anything significantly different.

Another special group within the gang is the 40-man detachment known as the Mothers of Merciless (and shorter appellations). These are some of Morgan's best fighters—Veteran and Elite NPCs—most of whom have either military or police backgrounds. A number were "strongmen" for organized crime outfits. All boast M16s, handguns, and either kevlar or ballistic cloth. They are Morgan's bodyguard and shock troops, and are loyal only to him and to the Right Out Right Rev. Richard Q. Starkey. They alone have opted for a new food source, an act which confers membership in this special inner sanctum of Morgan's most trusted warriors.

In addition to Morgan, a number of other important individuals guide the Gang of the Gun.

One of the most important of these is the Right Out Right Rev. Richard Q. Starkey. Starkey joined the gang less than a year ago, but has been an important factor in its growth and continued cohesiveness. A podium-thumping preacher-type, Starkey is capable of whipping the gang up into a fervor and of convincing its members that they alone represent the future of man. It is not only their fate, but their *duty* to see to it that the weak and unfit (i.e., those who are not of the gang) are removed from the face of the earth. It is he who elevated the M16 to the status of religious icon and who offers up renditions of some peculiarly revised psalms ("Thy barrel and thy sight, they comfort me. They maketh my foe lie down in green pastures," etc.). While he sounds—and seems—quite mad, Starkey is, after all, preaching to the choir. Whatever shreds of conscience still exist in the gang members, they welcome his constant and vehement assurance of the rightness of their ways.

Nearly as important as the gang "witch doctor," Starkey, is the mysterious Moms Turpin. She is something of a personnel screening expert and is detailed in the NPC section at the end of this adventure.

Two figures of lesser importance are Wiz Wedzarski and Doc Capo, chief "scientist" and chief "medico," respectively. They too are detailed in the NPC section.

The prisoners will express some confusion as to *why* Morgan and Starkey seem set on going to Hartford by way of the Rifle River. As best they can tell, part of the reason is that Rifle River has spiritual power since it flows past so many former firearm plants. But they also heard rumors that Starkey knows of a number of unsuspecting communities along the river which would make for easy plunder and perhaps a good winter camp. Also, they swear that Starkey receives "visions" in which the locations of undiscovered supplies are revealed to him. He had a "big" vision having to do with the Rifle River, and that seemed to decide the issue.

THE PLAN

After considering the information gained in the interrogations, Holsgirder will point out that there's no practical way of defeating the gang in a land battle. He doesn't have the capacity to move the necessary manpower, and even if he did, he couldn't accept those kinds of losses.

Let the players come up with ideas of their own. But in the final analysis, probably the only way that the entire gang can be destroyed or dispersed in a single conclusive engagement is as follows.

En route to its target destination (Rifle River), the gang is going to have to go over several bridges, most of which are in somewhat dubious states of repair, and all of which might contain traps or ambushes set by local townsfolk. If he could be sure *which* bridge they'd be going over at *what* time, and *where* Morgan and his Mothers of Merciless would be in the general group, Holsgirder believes that he could finish off the Gang of the Gun with the three-inch gun on the *Chilula* and the mortars. He could catch the gang in the middle of the span with a mixture of airburst fragmentation and white phosphorous rounds. If the command personnel are eliminated, the rest of the damage should be heavy enough to fragment the gang into smaller pieces, which probably won't last the winter.

But the problem is finding a way to coordinate the attack. Once again, the players should be allowed to toss around their ideas, although, again, there's probably only one reasonable solution: They'll have to infiltrate the Gang of the Gun. It's best if they come up with this solution themselves, so give them a little time; undercover work in the midst of a barbarian horde is going to be justly perceived as the last option.

With this much figured out, Corporal Dusanenko can offer some tactical insight that might be helpful, but he should only do so if the characters are having a difficult time arriving at a plan of action.

Since Morgan and his commanders seem uncertain of the bridge's conditions, and their advance team won't be returning, the gang doesn't have any advance reconnaissance. If the player characters were to be encountered heading west—masquerading as a band of mercenaries—they could claim to have found routes through "minefields" on or near the bridges to the east. Morgan might be interested in keeping them around on a trial basis—at least until he crosses the bridges safely.

Holsgirder can improve the plan by offering to mine the bridge they select for the ambush site. Of course, the characters will know in advance where the mines are. As far as Morgan will be able to tell, the infiltrators will be performing a valuable service.

While on the bridge, the team can use a five-kilometer pocket radio to communicate Morgan's exact location to the *Chilula*'s three-inch gunnery team. The mortars will be set up under cover on land. They will be pre-ranged and set to fire for effect. As a backup, Holsgirder can rig the bridge with demo charges, although he'd prefer not to blow it; it'll be a long time before anybody will be building bridges again.

The referee is advised to let the players do as much of this strategizing as possible; they're the focus of the adventure and should be allowed to behave as such. However, Holsgirder is a shrewd old bird and won't okay any plans that have obvious holes in them. He's also an experienced enough commander to know that the more complex a plan, the greater the chance for something to go wrong. If the players try to put forward anything much more intricate than the aforementioned operation, he's likely to put his foot down.

After some careful studying of maps and a best-guess estimate of where the Gang of the Gun can probably be met, Holsgirder will opt for the Rifle River crossing as his ambush point. The Old Saybrook Bridge is an easy target, and the Saybrook Point headland will allow him to keep the *Chilula* hidden until she comes out shooting.

The only problem anybody foresees with this site is that there are only *two* bridges across the Rifle River. One—the highway—is a good target with no opportunities for cover. The other is a railroad bridge; slower going for a horde of people to cross, but a more difficult target with too much cover. The group will have to make sure that it can get the gang to cross on the highway bridge. And whatever the gun and the mortars can't handle, the demolition charges will.

BUT NOT A MEETING OF THE MINDS

The characters will be taken by a small, fast, coastal patrol boat down to Branford Point, a small beach community just a few miles east of New Haven and south of the coast, hugging Interstate 95. From there, they will begin a slow approach to New Haven on foot. Judging from the gang members' rate of travel, that's probably where they are right now.

Proceeding at a slow walk, the PCs will meet the gang in 2D6 hours. They will bump into a point patrol of three men (one Veteran, one Experienced, one Novice). The referee should feel free to let the characters' actions dictate the nature of this first, crucial meeting. In general, the gang members are somewhat trigger-happy, but if they are approached cautiously from a position of strength—and the characters' all-important M16s are visible—the group stands a good chance of making initial contact without any fireworks erupting. If shooting does occur, the van of the gang is less than one kilometer behind, and Morgan will send a scout team ahead while he prepares to move forward with a platoon-sized element.

If the characters manage to control the situation and arrange a parley, they will find Morgan a disturbingly glib host who smiles far too much. The somewhat wild-eyed Rev. Starkey will be at his side; the cagey and quiet Moms Turpin has a pair of glittering eyes almost lost as she lurks in nearby shadows. Morgan will express an interest in the group's recent route of travel and will betray an ill-concealed worry that the Rifle River bridge is mined. At this point, he'll start to ask the characters—in a most circumspect fashion—whether or not they encountered any of his men in their travels. He'll also start to feel out the player characters' attitudes regarding "alternate food sources."

It is important for the referee to begin to keep a very close eye on the player characters' reactions from this point on. They are dealing with inhuman monsters,



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and if they let their real feelings show, they're going to be in very deep trouble. They have some leeway, since Morgan now believes that his advance recon team has been lost and that he, therefore, needs the group—at least until they get over the bridge.

Morgan will make a fairly generous offer in ammunition and "normal" food in exchange for the characters' services as guides, since they've been over this land before. Then, depending on their suitability, he informs them that he might extend them an offer to join the gang itself. A number of the Mothers of Merciless who overhear this offer will begin to take an instant dislike to the characters, since it is obvious that new ex-military personnel would receive a high place within the gang—at their expense. Without much further ado, the gang sets off down the road with the characters at the front.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

At this point, the referee should begin referring back to the encounter notes he made when the characters travelled this way previously. Any communities that were encountered should be noted and positioned on the map. Morgan will ask the characters what lies ahead, with a particular interest in settlements. His interest is as obvious as it is abhorrent.

The characters now have a real dilemma ahead of them. Their objective is to get the gang to the bridge at the Connecticut River, but does that mean they have to stand by—or help—while the gang pillages several small communities along the way? This is a problem for the characters to solve. Trying to guide the gang around these settlements might work. However, if a settlement's cookfire is spotted and the community is discovered anyway—and it lies right on the path the gang *would* have taken if not for the group's warning—then Morgan is going to become *very* suspicious of the player characters.

The gang moves approximately 10 miles a day, picking the surrounding land clean as it moves.

TALES AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

On the first night with the gang, the characters may note a number of interesting occurrences.

First of all, the Mothers of Merciless conduct their very revolting nightly ritual in a

closed tent, right at mealtime. Rev. Starkey's voice can be heard droning in a half-hysterical pitch. Guards are posted at all entrances to the tent.

Moms Turpin will be seen holding court at a large campfire nearby, hearing the entreaties of women and newer gang members, some of them wounded. Though a matriarchal figure, she is anything but maternal; there is a detached arrogance in all her interactions. The response of her supplicants seems to be absolute terror.

On the second night, one of the characters will happen to overhear two perimeter guards talking about how Morgan was thinking about staying on the west side of the Rifle River—that he didn't want to cross a mined bridge. But Starkey nearly jumped out of his skin, setting up a hue and a cry about the easy targets on the eastern shore, and visions of plenty, and the voice of God telling him that they *had* to cross. Seems strange, comments the other guard, but Starkey's visions of where to find supplies have always been right thus far. No reason to start doubting it now.

On this same night, Moms Turpin will drop by the characters' campfire (along with six of her largest attendants) and "chat" with them. Moms Turpin has the equivalent of INT: 70, so the characters had better have their wits about them. Moms doesn't like the characters one bit. Their sudden fortuitous appearance strikes her as a little too fortuitous, and she has a hunch that the group members are not quite as hardhearted as they seem. She's hoping to trick them into revealing themselves before they get to the bridge—which she has a bad feeling about. While it would go against them in the long run if they were actually joining the gang, the characters *can* simply tell Moms to get lost; that won't get them anything other than a lethal look and her undying hatred (which they almost have already, anyhow). The trick with Moms is to say nothing and ignore her.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

A note to the referee: The ambush at Rifle River can be resolved using the large-scale combat rules presented in **Ruins of Warsaw** and **Challenge** 25. While it won't seem like much of a fight at first, Morgan has one or two tricks up his sleeve if some of his people survive the first round of bombardment (so how good *is* that coast guard gunner anyway?). Packed for travel but easily accessible are two M2HB HMGs, a pair of M208s, and a case of smoke grenades. The *Chilula* is pretty much out of range, but if Morgan smokes the target zone and nearby area, the three-inch gunners are going to have a hard time hitting him (luck required) on subsequent shots. Also, the MGs and 208s just might be able to trade some shots with the coast guard shore mortars. A close assault on those positions after they have been softened up might not be so easily repulsed (see below).

It's all up to the referee; he could even decide that the detonators for the demolition charges on the bridge were faulty, if he wants to remove that "failsafe" option. On the other hand, however, the referee can just report the results to the players as they'd hear and see them. The only combat resolution necessary would be those situations in which the characters are directly involved.

When the PCs arrive at the Old Saybrook Bridge early on their fourth day with the gang, they'll discover that Morgan has decided to send 10 gang members—including five of the Mothers of Merciless—along with them as they blaze a trail across the mined bridge. No matter how the group members protest (and they'd better not protest too much), they won't be able to change Morgan's mind on this.

The main part of the gang will follow about 300 meters behind the group and its escort. The bridge is about one kilometer long, so most of the gang will be on the bridge by the time the group gets to the east side. Or at least it should be.

At this point, the characters must devise a way to distract their escort long enough to call in to *Chilula* when Morgan and his entourage arrive at the agreed part of the bridge. The bombardment will commence *only* if such a signal is received, since Commandant Holsgirder will have no way of knowing if the PCs are even out of the line of fire, much less if their primary target—Morgan and the majority of the Mothers of Merciless—are in the target zone.

What the characters don't know (but might very well guess) is that the escort has orders concerning what to do with them once the bridge has been safely traversed. If the PCs have managed to impress Morgan with their combat abilities and seem like true recruits for the Gang of the Gun, the orders will simply be to keep an eye on them. But if Morgan has any doubts, the Mothers of Merciless will turn on the group with all barrels blazing. They will certainly do this once the bombardment begins. The five Mothers of Merciless are Veteran NPCs. Of the other five gang members, three are Experienced and two are Novice.

The characters will be able to keep Morgan in sight as they pick their way through the minefield and will have no trouble identifying the exact second he enters the target zone. Moms Turpin will be with him, but—oddly enough—Starkey will not. And perhaps a half-dozen of the Mothers of Merciless are gone as well.

Once the fight is in progress, the PCs will discover a few things, either from their own Recon rolls or via a radio link to spotters on the *Chilula*. Apparently, some of the gang's combat effectives remained behind. About 20 of the gang's rank and file will try to attack the coast guard mortar position. The referee can either resolve this combat in the conventional fashion or simply assume that after the initial surprise, the superior firepower of the coast guard will shatter that attack.

However, more worrisome, and most curious, is what Holsgirder's sharp old eyes will pick out through the mist of cordite and smoldering wreckage. Under the cover of the attack, another small team—perhaps the size of a squad—has crossed the river on the railroad bridge. As Holsgirder loses sight of that team, it seems to be heading due east. If it keeps going that way, it will get to Groton, Mystic, or Newport, eventually—or, if the team has a closer destination in mind, the ruined town of Waterford and the three Millstone nuclear reactors.

DRY CLIPS AT WATERFORD

If the PCs pursue the team that's pressing eastward, they'll find it led by none other than the Right Out Right Rev. Richard Q. Starkey. The force with him is comprised of his most ardent converts—who will all fight to the death. But they are not screaming fanatics. It turns out that the reverend and his troops are quite level-headed in a fight—extraordinarily professional.

Along with the reverend are six of the Mothers of Merciless (two Elite, four Veteran) and eight of the better-armed rank and file (four Veteran, four Experienced). They will give the group a stiff, to-the-finish fight, using every tactical trick in the book. The referee should feel free to pull out the stops for this firefight; Starkey is *very* smart and will try to catch the characters in crossfires, defilades, flanking maneuvers—whatever he has the time and terrain to arrange.

Starkey will have a small head start, but once he detects the pursuit (he is an Elite NPC with RCN: 65), and he expects pursuit), he'll try to get his force behind a terrain feature that obstructs the line of sight and set up an ambush. The characters will begin their pursuit at a distance of 700 yards; their actions will determine how fast they close the distance. The firefight will probably take place in or around the town of Old Lyme, which is approximately three kilometers from the Rifle River crossing.

If the firefight is going on too long, but the characters have not managed to close in, Starkey may decide to leave half his force with orders to hold the position for two or three hours, then keep up a running rearguard action. Meanwhile, the rest of his team will press on to his real objective: Waterford and the nuclear reactors.

One way or the other, Starkey will never reach his destination. Holsgirder will dispatch a team to lie in ambush at the next river crossing (East Lyme, about 10 miles further east). However, even if the characters know this, they will still be urged to either neutralize Starkey or pin him down until coast guard shore parties can arrive. If the characters haven't put two and two together by now, Holsgirder will voice suspicions that Starkey was probably a New America plant, and now that he knows about the potential of the coast guard, he can't be allowed to escape, even if he does abort his mission to the nuclear plants.

Whether Starkey is finally encountered alive or otherwise, some papers and maps will prove that he was, in fact, a New America plant.

Additionally, his miraculous "visions" of good supply opportunities for the Gang of the Gun turn out to have been prepositioned caches for which he had maps.

CONCLUSION

The players now have a choice between continuing play in America, or—assuming that they are interested in pursuing their fortunes back in Europe (without catching a ride on a submarine)—they now have a way to return.

Play in America—in this case the northeast—is full of possibilities. Not only is there land to recivilize and towns to rebuild, but Carlucci's UBF and the New America forces are still active in the area. Mystic and Newport may come under attack from these forces, or possibly new hordes of the starving, the desperate, and the dangerous. Holsgirder's dream of building a little oasis of civilization with the potential to grow is a noble one and could keep characters busy for a very long time indeed.

RECONSTRUCTION OR RELOCATION

It wasn't a pretty sight; bodies scattered across the entire length of the bridge. Smoke everywhere, mostly from the fires started by the willie-pete. They found Morgan; he was killed while trying to single-handedly set up one of the M2s, his precious Mothers of Merciless heaped around him. I was just glad it was over and that we were seeing the aftermath from the bridge of the Chilula. *I've never been much of a sailor, but right now that old rustbucket felt like home sweet home.*

"So where do you folks go from here?" Holsgirder growled in an off-handed tone.

I shrugged. "We've been a little too busy to think about that."

His smile was as sudden as it was unexpected.

"Well, it was work well done, captain. Wouldn't mind having a few extra bodies around with your kind of credentials.

"After all, I've agreed to help Dusanenko get his damned M16 dies out of Hartford.

"We'll need some skilled people for that job. And we could always use those same skills to help us make life ever more pleasant in Newport."

I had to smile back. "You're not a very subtle briber, sir."

"Never said I was."

"Well, I don't know...."

"Three square meals. Place of your own. Warm in the winter."

"Next you'll be promising me electricity, running water, indoor plumbing...."

"Give us time, captain, give us time. But of course, if you'd like, I could always help you get back to Europe. I'm told that in a few days a ship out of Newport News will be stopping over with us before heading across."

He had intended that offer as sarcasm, but saw that it wasn't quite flying the way he expected.

McGruder got a sort of dreamy look in his eyes.

"Never did link up with Hernandez after Warsaw, and I don't like leaving our own behind. Do you think she could still be alive?"

I turned back to Holsgirder and shrugged, grinning. "You've made us two interesting offers, admiral. We're going to have to think about it...."

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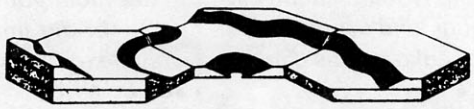
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Personalities

The following NPC descriptions may prove useful.

CLYDE MORGAN

Clyde Morgan, leader of the Gang of the Gun, was born in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, New York, in 1970. His father, a crack addict, died in a shoot-out when he was 16. Clyde was clever but didn't apply enough of his innate intelligence to classwork. However, he realized that the army offered a way out of his dismal existence—he joined at 19.

Clyde didn't like the army, and the army didn't like Clyde. A constant discipline case, Clyde rose to the ground rank of PFC before his time was up. He did acquire a strong liking for guns and the power they implied. He found work as a lookout for drug dealers and was able to capitalize on some connections in the military in order to work the occasional sale.

When war reared its ugly head, Clyde ducked his—deep into upper Manhattan and the Bronx. When the officials caught up to him (four name changes later), there wasn't enough transport left to get troops overseas. Instead, the newly formed 78th Light Infantry was assigned security duty in New York City.

Morgan was the key go-between in the deal that resulted in the loss of the Federal Reserve gold convoy featured in the adventure module **Armies of the Night**. However, he was smart enough to know that given his connections with the army and the New York underworld, it would be unwise to try to get a cut of the gold; that would get him a bullet in the back. Instead, Clyde took weapons, ammo, food, and supplies as his part of the deal. From this power base he built the original core of the Gang of the Gun. As food grew increasingly scarce in New York during the winter of 2000-2001, Morgan began to consider other sources of nourishment. Many of the insane who roamed the streets and sewers of the skeleton city already had made the gruesome transition. His decision made him something of a legend: He became the baddest of the bad. As the other New York gangs broke up, their members ran to him, believing his answer—absolute ruthlessness—would prevail.

Clyde savors his power, but trusts no one, not even his stepaunt—Moms Turpin. Though he seems invulnerable to remorse or pity, his barbaric dietary decision has unbalanced him, turning him into a pathological time bomb. The guilt he denies will consume him, if he does not meet an earlier demise.

NPC Motivation Results: *Spade Queen:* Clyde has only one motivation for any action he performs: self-aggrandizement. He is completely and utterly selfish. *Club 10:* Clyde is brutal and gets a sadistic thrill when engaged in destructive acts. He welcomes violence as a solution to any and all problems.

THE RIGHT OUT RIGHT REV. RICHARD Q. STARKEY

Richard Quentin Starkey is the 27-year-old son of a preacher from Wheeling, West Virginia. His father's politics were as extreme as his fire-and-brimstone convictions. "Better Dead Than Red" was the motto of the Starkey household. Father and son both became involved in the New America movement.

Richard quickly showed his father's talents for eloquent histrionics, but also displayed two qualities that were uniquely his. First, he was astoundingly intelligent. Richard would have been a better student had he been in college at age 14; conventional classwork left him bored. Second, Richard was capable of dramatic presentations and was also quite accomplished at bold-faced lying—often for ruthless purposes.

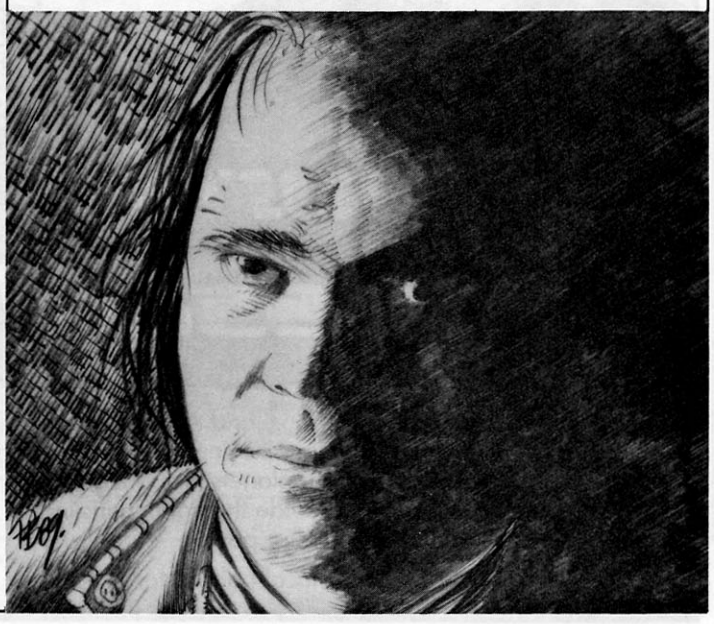
The leadership of New America saw a tremendous potential in Richard, who since his 20th birthday has been involved in one New America covert operation after another. If Clyde Morgan is fire, Richard Starkey is ice. He has killed not only frequently but also without a trace of emotion.

In fact, Starkey is a full-fledged sociopath, a fact he has been able to hide behind an intricate screen of assumed attitudes and beliefs. Like most sociopaths, he has the capacity to appear and behave with complete normalcy if he so chooses.

Late in 2000, Starkey was assigned to proceed to the New York area and build a New America cell "or locate other allies" who could be instrumental in finding and salvaging the components needed to repair the New America-controlled Yankee nuclear plant in Maine. Arriving in New York, Starkey discovered that the New America cells in southern New York had been wiped out; he was on his own. The reputation of the Mothers of Merciless intrigued him, particularly since they advertised their services as a free-lance group. Perhaps, therefore, they could be pushed or prodded into travelling.

Starkey's wild, visionary preacher performance led the group to three New York City New America caches, and from then on he was one of the most powerful members of the Gang of the Gun. His "visions" and careful manipulation of the gang's psychology was what set them out on this new quest in the first place—all so he could facilitate a rendezvous with four New America agents from Maine at the second Millstone reactor and salvage the necessary equipment.

NPC Motivation Results: *Spade Ace:* He has a mesmerizing



charisma that he uses to snare people into doing his bidding. *Spade Queen:* Unfortunately, Starkey's use of that power is twisted. His devotion to the cause of New America is self-interested. He expects that in a nation rebuilt by New America he will have enough hero status to get away with whatever dire perversions he desires, as long as he is somewhat discreet. He even hopes to be the head of New America one day.

MOMS TURPIN

A former day-care fraud con artist, 54-year-old Mabel "Moms" Turpin is an overweight woman who has endured a difficult life. The nuclear horrors of 1997 were just the worst chapter in an already dismal book.

Moms is Clyde Morgan's step-aunt (his mother's second husband's sister) whom he knew briefly before entering military service. When the 78th was stationed in New York City, she went looking for him, in order to try to wheedle some extra food. It was during this period that Clyde realized that the woman was more than another empty mouth; she was potentially an invaluable asset.

Her talent is in reading people; she can smell out a guilty conscience like a hound dog. She is an expert at identifying and capitalizing upon an individual's insecurities, paranoias, addictions, etc. As such, she is Morgan's adviser when it comes to new personnel and problems within the gang. She can appear to be caring, but is completely self-interested and will stop at nothing to assure her own survival and protect her position.

NPC Motivation Results: *Diamond King:* To Moms Turpin, money is everything, and everything can be had for enough money. Her particular version of power-madness centers on possessions and creature comforts. *Spade King:* Moms is an accomplished liar and can feign emotions. She will frequently adopt the guise of "just a poor old woman that dear Clyde takes care of" with newcomers, trying to catch them off guard.

STEFAN "THE WIZ" WEDZARSKI

The Wiz is a second-generation Pole who used to teach chemistry and physics in the New York Public School system. He eventually fell into Morgan's hands, who discovered in Wedzarski a useful postholocaust chemist. Black and smokeless powder, refined alcohol production, homemade pharmaceuticals—the Wiz is a walking goldmine who is part of Morgan's constant entourage.

NPC Motivation Results: *Diamond Jack:* Wedzarski is a complete and utter coward. He'd have left the gang long ago if he had the nerve to try. *Diamond Three:* Wedzarski likes his creature comforts, which is another factor that has kept him from attempting to break away from the gang.

DOCTOR ALPHONSE DE CAMPONELLA, M.D.

Camponella entered the group under the sponsorship of one of the Mothers of Merciless who came from a crime background. Doc Capo is so named because he was responsible for discreetly handling wounds suffered by mobster chieftains (referred to as *capos*). He is the gang's medical officer, and along with the Wiz, is responsible for scrounging and/or creating whatever drugs are available to Morgan's people.

NPC Motivation Results: *Spade Jack:* Camponella is a haughty man of some learning; he is fond of the opera, fine coffee, and cigars. He sees himself as a surgeon among savages, doing what he must to survive. *Spade Five:* The doctor also likes to be in a position of importance—even among barbarians. Ω



SPACE 1889

Ether Ship Etiquette

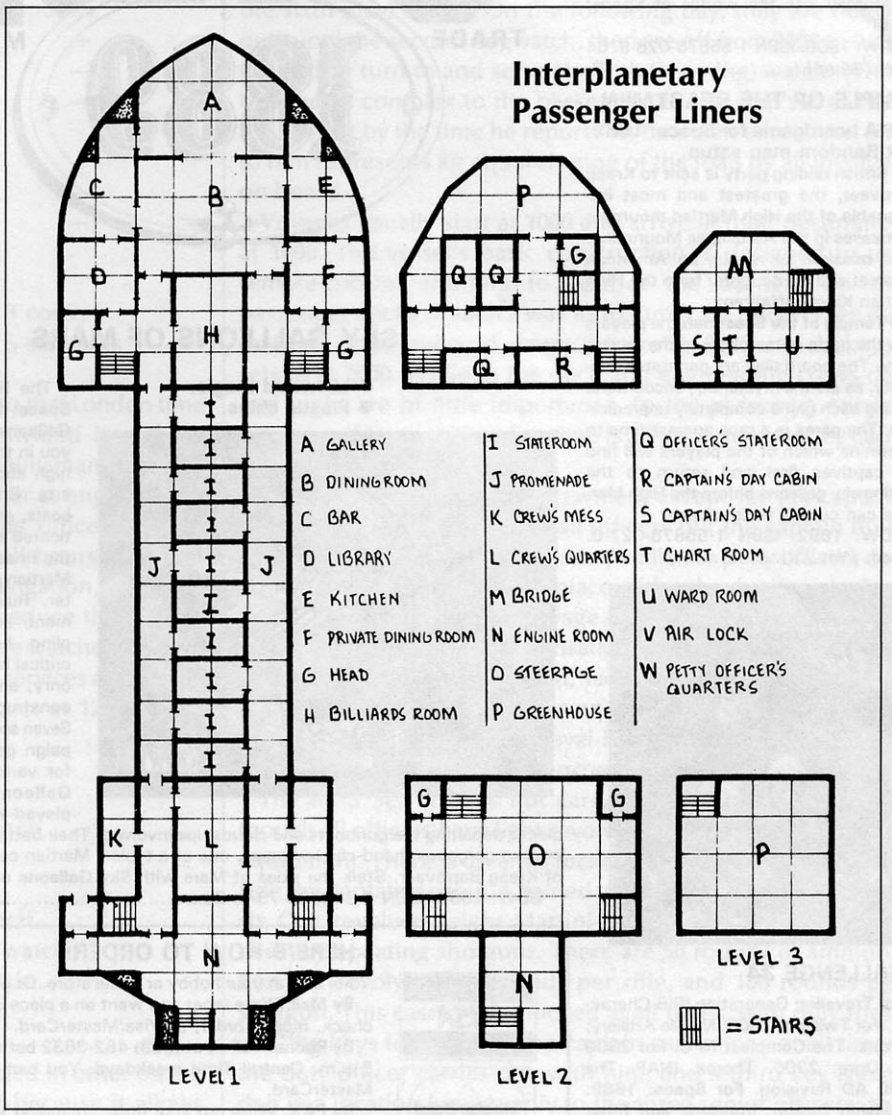
Greg Novak

A Guide to Interplanetary Ether Ship Etiquette, or Getting There is Half the Fun

A Journey To Mars In 70 Days

To anyone planning to ship a party off to Mars, it may come as a shock to learn that it takes 70 to 90 days to make the trip. The average time needed to travel to Mars runs in the range of 80 days for the average liner. The restriction of a small area which the average interplanetary liner has to offer for such an extended length of time caused some problems on the early voyages of these vessels. To avoid future difficulties of a similar type, the companies involved in operating the liners to Mars have evolved an etiquette system that, in itself, provides some interesting background on this period.

The following is a guide to interplanetary ether ship etiquette and uses the trip of the Cunard liner RMS *Servia* to serve as an example of what a typical passage to Mars would be like to the passengers and crew involved.



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GDW: 1906. ISBN 1-55878-028-9. 64 pages. *(Aug.)*.....**$8.**

TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN

- **A boardgame for Space: 1889!**
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A British raiding party is sent to Kraag Barrovaar, the greatest and most impregnable of the High Martian mountain fastnesses in the Astusapes Mountains. Their mission: to rescue an American diplomat and his daughter from the High Martian King Hattabranx.

In **Temple of the Beastmen** the players take the parts of members of the raiding party. The board tiles are generated randomly, as are the mysterious encounters, making each game completely unpredictable. The game is a race against time to determine which of the players will find the captives first and return to the waiting sky galleons before the High Martians can cut off their escape.

GDW: 1892. ISBN 1-55878-027-0. Boxed. *(Nov.)*.....**$24.**



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- **Liftwood magic.**
- **Plastic ships.**



The first game in the **Space: 1889** series, **Sky Galleons of Mars** places you in thrilling air battles high above the red deserts. British aerial gunboats, armed with sophisticated naval guns, duel the finest cloudships the Martian princes can muster. Rules cover movement and firing, grappling, boarding actions, critical hits, exotic weaponry, and complete ship construction and rating. Seven scenarios and a campaign game are detailed for variety of play. **Sky Galleons of Mars** is played with large plastic pieces depicting the gunboats and cloudships involved. Their battles are fought out on two gorgeous, hand-colored maps, one of a typical Martian canal city, another of Kraag Barrovaar. Stalk the skies of Mars with **Sky Galleons of Mars**!

GDW: 1890. ISBN 0-943580-73-0. Boxed.....**$28.**

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- **A caravan to adventure.**
- **Sabotage and treachery!**

Where the Martian canals are no longer functional or where they were never created in ancient times, transportation needs have been taken over by vast caravans. Large wagons pulled by half-wild Martian beasts and protected by nefarious mercenaries carry items for trade between cities otherwise isolated from one another. Join a caravan expedition bound for Alclyon, a caravan beset by bad omens and subtle sabotage. Someone is willing to go to great lengths to see that the caravan does not reach its destination.

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- **The Hill Martians.**
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- **The ancient Martian profession.**
- **Piracy in the skies.**

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This module chronicles the exploits of the cloud captains of Mars, the elite, human Red Captains, and the dreaded pirates of the skies.

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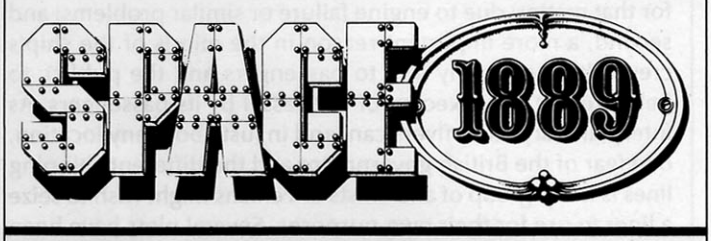
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The RMS *Servia* will depart from the London docks on January 24th, 1889, and to those in the know the ship's name alone gives two important facts. First, the fact that the ship's name ends in "ia" indicates that it is owned and managed by the Cunard line. (Other Cunard liners include the *Laconia*, *Caronia*, and *Carmania*, while the rival White Star liners' names end in "ic"—the *Adriatic*, *Oceanic*, *Olympic*, *Majestic*, etc.) Second, the letters RMS stand for Royal Mail Ship, which means the vessel was built with the direct support, both in terms of financial aid and planning, of the British government. Thus, one can be assured of a safe voyage in good hands.

Three types of people fill interplanetary ether flyers: crewmen, steerage-class passengers, and first-class passengers.

1. Below are the typical crewmen found on a passenger liner, using the RMS *Servia* as an example.

PASSENGER LINER CREWMEN

Deck Division	*Engine Room*	*Passenger Service*
	Officers	
1 captain	1 chief engineer	1 purser
1 first officer	1 asst. engineer	—
1 second officer	—	—
1 third officer	—	—
	Petty Officers	
—	3 bosuns (trimsmen)	—
—	3 machinist's mates	—
	Crewmen	
—	3 oilers	3 cooks
—	—	6 stewards

The liner runs on Greenwich Mean Time, so that London time is kept during the voyage. The crew is divided into three watches: Each has an officer to serve as helmsman, a bosun as trimsman, and a machinist's mate and oiler as engine room crew. The captain, purser, and engineering officers do not stand watches as such, but are on-call at all hours. The first officer and captain are responsible for navigation, and take turns at computing the ship's location to reduce the chance of error. The cooks and stewards do not serve watches as such, but are assigned to duty as needed. Medical services are usually provided by the purser. The ship's day starts at 1200.

TYPICAL SHIP'S DAY

Time	*Activity*
1200-1600	First (afternoon) watch
1600-1800	First dogwatch
1800-2000	Second dogwatch
2000-0000	Third (evening) watch
0000-0400	Fourth (midwatch) watch
0400-0800	Fifth (morning) watch
0800-1200	Sixth (day) watch

The seven-watch system is not really needed in ether travel, as it is always daylight, but has been kept because it allows the crewmen a chance to rotate duties throughout the voyage and allows the ship's crew to eat one major meal per day. While the food is served nearly around the clock, the supper meal is considered to be the major meal of the day by the crew, and the dogwatch system allows all crewmen to take part within a reasonable length of time. In addition, without the dogwatch system, those crewmen and officers attached to the night watches would remain on those duties for the entire voyage, which in the case of the officers, limits their contact with the passengers on-board.

The watch system works as follows: Those crewmen serving the first watch have the following two watches off duty, and return to stations for the third (evening) watch. They are then off duty from 0000 to 0800, and end up their day on duty for the sixth (day) watch. On the following day, they are not on duty until the second dogwatch, then are off from 2000 to 0400, when they turn to and serve the fifth (morning) watch. While this seems complex to the passenger, to the ship's crewman it is old hat by the time he reports on-board an ether flyer, and to him represents an equal sharing of the load by all involved on-board.

Voyages usually start at 1000 and arrive at their destination at 1000. The vessel's basic construction is designed to use remote-control shutters to control the daylight on the passenger decks in such a way as to duplicate the average day on Earth. Thus on-board, dawn "breaks" at 0600, and darkness sets in at 2000. While to the deck and engineering crews day and night are of little importance, to the passenger service crewmen this use of London time is all-important as they carry out their duties.

The crew quarters for all crewmen, except for the captain, are very cramped, as usually all officers but the captain must share quarters with another officer, while the petty officers and crewmen use hammocks in place of bunks due to a lack of space. However, pay for a voyage runs two to three times that of a similar position on the transatlantic run, and leave between voyages is generous. As a result, vacancies do not exist, as there is a waiting list for all positions on-board. All crewmen and officers are members of the Royal Navy Reserve, and come to their posts well trained and experienced.

The RMS *Servia* does not carry any armament per se, although all officers have light revolvers as part of their personal equipment. There is an arms locker on the officers' deck outside the captain's cabin. Chained within are 12 naval cutlasses, six Colt revolvers, eight Martini-Henry rifles, and four Winchester repeating shotguns. There are 50 rounds of ammunition per revolver, 200 rounds per rifle, and 100 rounds per shotgun. This case is kept locked at all times, with only three existing keys to the lock. The captain carries one at all times; the duty officer carries one with him; and a third key is hidden in a location known only to the three senior officers: the captain, the first officer, and the chief engineer.

The weapons are carried for a two-fold purpose: first, in case the vessel is forced down on a hostile part of Mars (or Earth,

for that matter) due to engine failure or similar problems; and second, a more important reason in the minds of the ship's crew (although rarely told to passengers and the public), to help prevent any takeover of the vessel by its passengers. As interplanetary ether flyers can land in just about any location, one fear of the British government and the different shipping lines is that a group of anarchists or Fenians might wish to seize a liner to use for their own purposes. Several plots have been foiled already, and this fear remains in the minds of all crews making the run to Mars. (All weapons which are owned by passengers are locked in the cargo hold for the duration of the voyage, except for those sidearms carried by serving military officers.)

2. This fear brings into focus the second group of people found on such a vessel, those travelling steerage class. Steerage class on an interplanetary ether flyer exists because the subsidy paid to the different shipping lines is due in part to the fact that these vessels can be taken over and used as troop ships as needed by the British government. Each liner of the RMS *Servia* class can hold, in theory, an 80-man company of troops, as long as no other passengers are taken along. (The RMS *Servia*'s sister ship, the *Arabia*, carried a company of the Black Watch to Mars back in 1886 as a test of the ship's transport capacity.

The company sergeant major compared the trip to the normal voyage out to India, with the disadvantage that there was far less room to move about on-board the *Arabia*, but the advantage that it was not as "bloomin' 'ot."

Up to 20 passengers can be carried in the steerage section, with the British government being the major user of this means of travel. While complete units are sent off to Mars in military transports and on-board naval warships, the need for replacement specialists to arrive causes the War Department and Admiralty to send small drafts of men from time to time. Likewise, those specialist workers needed on Mars by the different government offices (i.e., electricians, shipbuilders, etc.) are sent off in steerage.

To supplement these, one finds those men and women who are off to the red planet on a low budget in search of wealth and adventure. And this last group of individuals has, in the past, included elements such as Fenians and anarchists who have made attempts to seize the liner on which they were travelling.

Travelling steerage class is an experience in itself, as the passengers are limited to the steerage deck and the greenhouse deck above it. Meals are sent aft from the kitchen three times a day (0600, breakfast; 1200, dinner; and 1800, supper) and served in the common room in which all steerage passengers live, regardless of gender. While two separate washrooms (heads) exist for the basic needs of those travellers, the ability to take a bath is extremely limited on any voyage when both sexes are present on the steerage deck. (On male-only voyages, a washtub can be set up in the middle of the deck.) Privacy is not an element found in the steerage deck.

The steerage deck can be sealed off from the rest of the ship by use of the ship's bulkhead system. While parts of the rest of the ship can be sealed off by the same system for damage control, the steerage area can be closed by remote control from the bridge for security reasons and cannot be opened except by the controls on the bridge. No system of manual override exists for opening the bulkheads in this area of the ship.

The steerage passenger list on this trip of the RMS *Servia* includes the following passengers (with 18 steerage passengers on-board, the RMS *Servia* has close to a full load).

STEERAGE PASSENGER LIST

WAR OFFICE TRAVEL WARRANT

Sergeant Joshua Oliver RE (Royal Engineers)

GOVERNMENT WARRANT

Harry Hansom, shipbuilder
Ian Robinson, shipbuilder
Alex Stewart, shipbuilder

ADMIRALTY TRAVEL WARRANT

Chief Petty Officer Michael Smith
Gunner's Mate David (Dusty) Rhodes
Gunner's Mate Alex Unroe
Machinist's Mate Eric McKenzie
Machinist's Mate Ian McGregor
Seaman Bertie Brown

PURCHASED PASSAGE

Mary Martin
Abby Green
Bessie Johnson
Klaus Kliest
Helmut Rommel
Kerry Conolly
Michael Collins
Patrick O'Flynn

3. The third group found on a liner like RMS *Servia* is the first-class passenger. The first-class fare on RMS *Servia* of £60 translates into a fare of $300—at a time when the average wage earner in the United States is being paid from $1 to $2 a day for a 12-hour day. Travel to Mars first-class is worth that both in cost as well as in experience. The RMS *Servia* has 10 first-class compartments, lettered A through J. Compartments A, B, C, D, and E open to the starboard promenade, which is known as the "Ladies' Way." Staterooms F, G, H, I, and J open to the Port Promenade, which is known as the "Bachelors' Walk." (Stateroom J is not always rented, as on some voyages the purser and a junior deck officer berth here, thus allowing the first officer and chief engineer their own private cabin.) Staterooms are divided in this manner to better provide the services expected by passengers who are travelling first class. Single ladies are berthed first in cabins A, B, and C, followed by married couples in D and E. Single men are berthed in the remaining cabins, with the result that on the average voyage the port promenade (Bachelors' Walk) holds males only, while the starboard side is a mixture of representatives of both of the genders.

While basic sanitary facilities are found in the cabins for the occupants, better facilities are found at the head of each passage, with the men's washroom on the port side, and the ladies' on the starboard side. There one may find bathing facilities and, in the case of the men's washroom, a barber chair

and steward for such duties as shaving or hair trimming. To allow for the best possible use of these facilities, at set hours during the voyage the vessel goes into "purdah." During purdah hours, portable screens are set up in several places to block off the vessel into two sections. The stewards place two sets of screens on the Ladies' Way, the first between the single ladies and the married couples' territory, and the second between the married couples and single men's territory. The doorways into the private dining room and the Ladies' Way are locked, and one additional screen is placed on the stairway leading down from the officers' territory. The area enclosed within this section is considered off-limits to all males, though the screen arrangement at the married couples' end of the Ladies' Way will allow the married men the ability to reach their cabins, as long as they do not mind having to go through the steerage area of the ship to reach the aft end of the passage. The closure of the private dining room during the purdah hours allows this area to be used as a ladies' lounge, in the same manner as the library is used by the men.

For the men on-board, the billiard room, library, and Bachelors' Walk are likewise reserved for male use only during the purdah hours. Those male passengers who are married, or whose cabins are found on the Ladies' Way, can usually be found during purdah hours in the library or billiard room. (It should be pointed out that no woman who wished to keep her reputation would ever be found in the bar, library, or billiard room on shipboard, but some exceptions have occurred.) The vessel's dining room and gallery remain open during this time, and serve as a neutral ground in which meetings and classes may be held by passengers in mixed company.

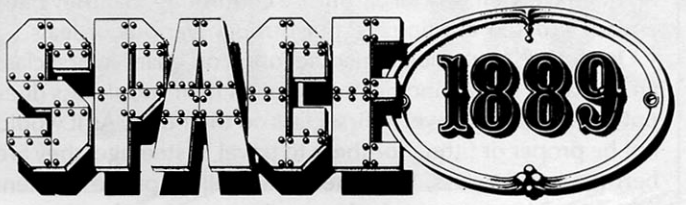
Purdah hours are usually morning (0600-0800), midday (1000-1600), and evening (1800-2000).

In addition to the purdah hours, the meal times regulate life on-board the RMS *Servia*. Four meals are served per day on the following basis for first-class passengers. Breakfast and tea are considered minor meals, which can be served in one's cabin if a passenger wishes, while for dinner and supper all first-class passengers meet in the dining room. Breakfast is served in the dining room from 0800-0900 and is available from cabin service from 0900-1000. Luncheon is served in the dining room only, from 1200-1400. Tea is served in the dining room from 1600-1700 and is available from cabin service from 1600-1800. Dinner is served in the dining room only, from 2000-2200 (formal dress is considered mandatory for supper—uniforms or black tie for gentlemen, evening dress for ladies).

Dinner and luncheon are both multicourse meals, and attendance in mandatory attire is considered socially correct, although no actual punishment occurs to someone who misses one of these meals without good cause. The purser is responsible for seating arrangements and makes every effort to move people about to prevent the formation of cliques.

The bar is open to serve drinks Monday through Thursday from 1300-2000 and from 2200-2400; Friday and Saturday from 1300-2000 and from 2200-0200; and Sunday from 1600-2000 and from 2200-0000. While the male passengers are free to take their drinks in the bar, a steward will deliver drinks to the library or billiard room, or, in the case of the ladies, to the dining room or the gallery.

The hours at which the meals are served, as well as the times the bar is open, help regulate the times that everyone on-board



is together. The rituals of purdah and the watch system act upon this to break up the interaction between the ship's company and passengers, as the watch system means that an officer will only be present at any given meal once every three days (except the captain), while purdah means the ladies and men are not together all the time. Often classes in Martian languages are conducted en route, or passengers may entertain the crew with lectures and other amusements. Card games are popular, although gambling is not allowed for high stakes. Several of the stewards can play musical instruments and can function as a band if needed, and from time to time passengers have organized amateur shows with their help. An important part of every Sunday is the church service (Church of England) held by the ship's captain in the gallery between 1000 and 1200.

FIRST-CLASS PASSENGER LIST

LADIES' WAY

Cbn	*Occupants*	*Notes*
A	Miss Emily Johnson and her maid	Miss Johnson is a noted London dance hall performer
B	Miss Katriana Wolff and her maid	Miss Wolff is author of *Canal Life of the Martians*
C	Mr. and Mrs. Robert Grant	First Secretary of the Boreosyrtis League British Legation
D	Dr. and Mrs. Alan Hay	Royal Medical Corps (major)
E	Henri LaBorquet and his manservant	French merchant

BACHELORS' WALK

Cbn	*Occupants*	*Notes*
F	Mr. Robert Burke and Mr. Richard Thornburn	American merchants
G	Cpt. Michael Smyth and Lt. Harold Jones	Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery, respectively
H	Cameron Robinson and his manservant	Gentleman companion for Miss Wolff
I	Baron Hans von Schmidt and Thomas von Prince	Major, Guard Jaeger Battalion, and captain, Guard Fusilier Battalion, respectively, both of the Imperial German Army
J	Sub-Lt. Ian Gordon and Sub-Lt. John Masters	Royal Highland Regiment (Black Watch), and Rifle Brigade, respectively

A "crossing the line" ceremony is held halfway to Mars. "Winged Martians" induct those who have not yet crossed the line. Merriment and practical jokes abound. And those who

do not have their official certificate confirming that they have already crossed the line are put through various ordeals.

One interesting group of people found on-board in first class are servants, maids, and batmen, though their social class does not allow them to travel in first class on their own. As it would not be proper or fitting for them to travel in steerage, they are berthed in first class, but dine in the gallery or the kitchen. They are welcome guests in the crew's quarters and even steerage, and are known to help out with the job of keeping the first-class passengers, especially their employers, happy. (It has been suggested that they as a general rule have a more enjoyable voyage out than their employers due to their freedom to roam the vessel.)

Because of the lack of gravity during the voyage, certain steps must be taken to preserve decorum. All passengers are required to wear shoes fitted with magnetic soles (the steamship line makes these available at reasonable rates, but passengers of breeding prefer to have theirs custom-made). Practically everything on the ship is either magnetized or designed in such a way as to remain fastened in place. Loose objects present a hazard, and the ship's crew collects and deals with them. Gentlemen are required to keep control of their hats, canes, and other loose personal items by whatever means they find most convenient (hats are usually dispensed with).

Clothing presents particular problems in the lack of gravity. Gentlemens' coattails tend to float about in a most comical manner if they are not properly secured, but a few strategically placed hooks, buttons or magnetic fasteners solve this problem. Ladies' skirts tend to fly about in a most improper manner if not secured in some way, also. A number of unique costumes have been designed to solve this problem (of which the most famous is the bloomer-like shipboard costume worn by certain members of the fast set), and some libertines actually have gone so far as to wear trousers! People of breeding, however, make use of more conventional solutions. Most women simply have a number of small and inconspicuous magnets sewn into their hems, which are attracted towards the deck, and keep everything in its proper place.

In steerage, passengers sometimes dispense with such restraints, and the high jinks and rough sport which take place belowdecks are legendary. A number of variations on popular games are played in steerage, especially when there are few passengers and is, therefore, room for such activities.

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS INFORMATION

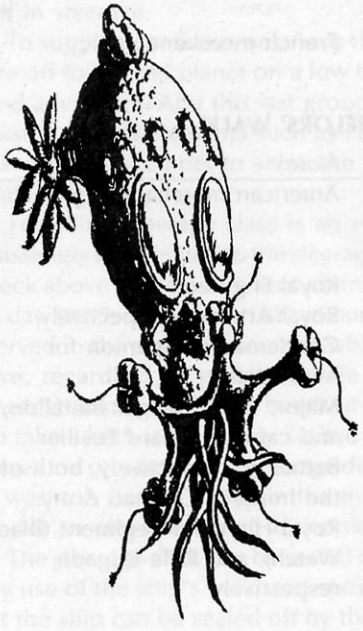
If you need to send your characters to Mars, consider the RMS *Servia*. Just bump from the passenger list anyone you need to displace. Consider the following en route adventures.

- A plot by the Fenians to take over the ship—after all, who are Burke and Thornburn, and is that Royal Navy party really a Royal Navy draft?
- Use one of the other passengers on the ship as a way to introduce a non-player character to your players that they might end up meeting later under different circumstances.
- Find out what plots lurk in the hearts of your fellow passengers, and do what you can to stop them.
- Find out who is cheating at cards, and expose them for the cads that they are. Ω

Still not sure what the Ides of March means to you?

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Space Combat was designed to be easy to learn, but difficult to master. Every game starts with ten players, and as each is eliminated, the chances of the game ending will increase. Turnsheets are custom made on a laser printer to aid you in filling out your next turn. The games run about 12-16 turns. Cost is $3.00 per turn. A rulebook (required before you can join) is only $1.00.

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GDW

The Hinterworlds

Lying on the trailing edge of the Imperium and adjacent to the Old Expanses, the Hinterworlds sector has been an ever-changing backwater throughout its known history. Hundreds of unallied worlds and a fistful of pocket interstellar unities comprise the sector. This structure keeps the Hinterworlds' geopolitical character in constant flux, as petty wars rage, alliances shift, trade routes are created, destroyed, or simply altered, and cultures rise and fall.

There are seven dominant, independent cultures lying within the sector's borders: Ral Ranta, a decaying remnant of the Long Night; the Aubian Trade Coalition, an aggressively trading human state; the Cytrialin Unity, a culture built by a human-alien symbiosis; the Gniivi, a domain populated by an alien race of great longevity; the Council of Leh Perash, a client state of the Hive Federation; the Outcasts of the Whispering Sky, aliens whose cosmic outlook is tainted by suspicion; and a section of the Third Imperium (currently under the jurisdiction of Margaret). It is these states, awash in a sea of independent star systems, that determine the sector's texture and trends.

Situated between the Imperium and the societies of the Two Thousand Worlds and the Hive Federation, the Hinterworlds has become stitched with trade routes connecting these realms. The trade routes, in addition to providing a level of cultural enrichment, give the sector a fair portion of its income, as ships and their crews traversing the sector are often in need of support services—ranging from starship maintenance to food products to armed escort services. Independent star systems lying off these major trade routes are seldom visited, and are steeped with the mystery and legend of the sector's past.

In more recent times, the Imperium's Civil War and the Solomani's push in the trailing direction of their sphere have given the Hinterworlds a new set of neighbors, who are at odds with one another. The struggle between the Solomani and Margaret's domain has left its mark on the sector, propelling it into a new era of change.

HISTORY

To obtain a perspective on the Hinterworlds' past, the best approach is to examine the rise of intelligent life within its borders. As with much of contemporary charted space, life can be set into two categories: indigenous and transplanted.

The sector has proven to be a ripe birthplace for new life forms and has given rise to eight nonhuman minor races. These have progressed at various rates of development, with some plying the stars in fusion-driven starships and others still probing the mysteries of life.

The introduction of Humaniti to the sector has occurred in four major waves. First, the Lamura Teg, a human minor race co-inhabiting the Cytrialin Unity, seems to have been brought there some 400,000 years ago as servants of the Ancients, along with their almost symbiotic, nonhuman "brothers," the Lamura Gav. Stranded together on the remote world of Cikuek (2907), they built their culture up from the ruins of the Final War.

Humaniti did not enter the Hinterworlds again until the Rule of Man (circa 2100 Imperial). The trailing edge of the Rule of Man was crossed by explorers probing as far as the young Hive Federation, merchants seeking new markets, and homesteaders looking for new lands or an escape from the bustle of Imperial space. As the curtains of the Rule of Man drew to a close and the Long Night began, many of the citizens from the Rule of Man remained in the Hinterworlds—staying clear of the chaos and decay within the Empire, while consolidating and protecting what resources they had on hand.

Humaniti made its third major debut in the sector in the midst of the Long Night with the voyages of several Solomani sleeper ships (circa 700 Imperial). These efforts centered on setting up civilizations in the sector's coreward and rimward ends.

Like bubbles in a seething cauldron, small empires sprang to life and fell in a very short time from the Long Night until dawn. The only remnant of this period is the once powerful Ral Ranta, which dominated a majority of systems along the spinward side of the Hinterworlds and trailing edge of the Old Expanses. Civil unrest and its centuries-old conflict with the Twenty-One Worlds empire to spinward eventually wore down the mighty Ral Ranta, leaving it a ghost of its former glory.

Credits

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Technical Support, Maps.....Digest Group Publications

Development.....Timothy B. Brown, Deb Zeigler

To the memory of R. Scott Byerley, whose enthusiasm will not be forgotten.

The last significant migration of Humaniti came with the contact with the Third Imperium. Currently, some worlds along the spinward edge have significant populations originating from the Imperium. The boundaries of the Imperium encroach on a small corner of the Adar subsector, with two Imperial systems defining the sum of the Imperial presence.

ASTROGRAPHY

Each of the seven interstellar governments within the Hinterworlds' borders has its own distinct character, which to varying degrees flavors the systems nearby. With the exception of the Council of Leh Perash, each of these scattered client states is an independent political entity.

RAL RANTA

The greatest interstellar nation ever to arise in the Hinterworlds, the human-dominated Ral Ranta was formed by the forcible amalgamation of smaller states during the Long Night. At its height, Ral Ranta covered over 10 subsectors.

When the Imperium recontacted the Hinterworlds, it initially met with some resistance on the part of Ral Ranta, with border skirmishes occurring for almost a century. Eventually, the decaying empire of Ral Ranta ceased hostilities and, shortly thereafter, began a guarded trade relationship with its new neighbors.

Although its power and independence had been calculatedly weakened by dependence on Imperial trade goods and resources, Ral Ranta believed its political posture to be one of military might, political caution, and complete independence.

Ral Ranta has been an unwilling and ignorant puppet of Imperial covert operations for centuries. The seeds of unrest had been carefully planted and were beginning to bear fruit, as rebellions and successions broke out in Ral Ranta's heart during the last four decades. In some cases, as the situations became unmanageable, the Imperium would supply "peacemaking" forces that would occupy a planet to restore order—but under Imperial jurisdiction.

The unexpected civil war within the Imperium has short-circuited the Imperial plans for Ral Ranta. As the Solomani pushed into the Old Expanses, Ral Ranta was forced to reexamine its political and economic dependencies. The introspection exposed some of the weaknesses the Imperium had been fostering. Reacting to the exposure of its Achilles' heel, Ral Ranta tightened its borders, limited trade, and became generally cool to any Imperial activity within its domain.

Ultimately, the 28-system empire of Ral Ranta hopes to reassert itself as a strong, independent entity by stringent laws and centralized planning. However, the damage already done by the Imperium may be too severe to heal. If this is the case, Ral Ranta's independence plan could backfire, blossoming into a total internal rebellion.

THE ANUBIAN TRADE COALITION

Descended from Solomani colonists, the Anubian Trade Coalition (ATC) is a somewhat young, aggressive trade empire centered in the Anubis subsector. After purchasing jump technology from the Imperium, the ATC has built itself up to a TL12 culture. Using commodities from the worlds in its interior, the ATC's ultimate goal is to economically dominate the sector and to open the markets beyond.

The Imperial stance on the ATC has been sticky since the start, as the ATC does not share the Imperium's view of suppressing psionic abilities, although the ATC neither encourages nor relies on psionics to the degree of the Zhodani. The Imperium has maintained relations with the ATC primarily to prevent it from becoming a stronger ally with the Solomani, who have had their eyes on the ATC for some time.

In using their psionic abilities, ATC traders seem for a long time to have had an unfair edge over much of their competition. Conducting mercantile ventures when you *know* your client's limits and desires makes success almost certain. This has led rival traders and ATC clients to adopt primitive forms of psionic defense, in the form of red herring surface thoughts. By misleading an ATC trader into thinking that he is certain of one's intentions, one is able to turn the tables.

Imperial trade concerns have been pressing for increased jump capability in order to give them another advantage in their competition with the ATC. The ATC is currently striving to push its vessels beyond the jump-2 limit.

THE CYTRIALIN UNITY

Entwined culturally, and to some degree biologically, the human-derived Lamura Teg and their small, spidery-legged, alien counterparts, the Lamura Gav (collectively, just the "Lamura"), have built a technologically advanced culture from the ruins of a hostile world which was originally home to neither race. Though anatomically dissimilar, their dependence and understanding of each other has given them a uniquely liberal perspective on the nature of the universe. They view the universe as an open cycle of resources, with each aspect being part of the greater whole.

This view has led to their great respect for life and the environment. As one passage of the Cytrialin says, "I breathe in the body of my descendants while standing upon that of my ancestors." The Lamura have great respect for all races, based on "the common thread which has built the fabric of our societies."

Most members of the Cytrialin Unity are seldom found without one of the books of the Cytrialin—a collection of passages and phrases which detail the outlook of the Lamura races.

The Lamura seem to take great pride in quoting appropriate passages from the Cytrialin at times of personal crisis.

This seemingly fanatical devotion to their faith has led many in the Imperium to label them as religious fanatics, although the Cytrialin is better described as a philosophy of life, as it is void of strict dogma, ceremony, or supernatural deities.

The Cytrialin Unity sits at the cornerstone of the Hinterworlds, Glimmerdrift Reaches, Crusic Margin, and Leonidae sectors; and it spans 58 worlds with its TL14 culture. Its location has made it a trade nexus for traffic between the Imperium and the Two Thousand Worlds. A web of trade routes radiates out from the world of Alike, within the Hinterworlds' borders.

Though politically independent from the Imperium, the Cytrialin Unity maintains good relations and regular trade with its giant, spinward neighbor. Aside from some inconvenient trade disruption, the advent of the Imperial Civil War has had little effect on the Unity.

THE GNIIVI

A nonhuman, minor race spanning the Hinterworlds-Leonidae border, the Gniivi use their jump-2 capable ships to maintain their 23-world state. Though engaging in trade with nearby client states—the Imperium, the Solomani, the Two thousand Worlds, and the Hive Federation—the Gniivi are fiercely protective of their independence.

A race of large, long-lived creatures, the Gniivi's expansion has been slow and deliberate—growing only when resources allow.

Recently, there have been reports that the Gniivi may be linked to commercial raiding in the sector's core, but their governing body adamantly denies such charges, claiming the Gniivi would see no benefit from such ventures.

THE COUNCIL OF LEH PERASH

Protruding its boundaries into the Aquila subsector, the Council of Leh Perash is a Hiver-allied client state spread across 42 systems—eight of which lie in the Hinterworlds. This state takes its name from the meeting which gave birth to the state. Humans and human minor races compose only 20 percent of the council's population, with the other 80 percent being Jenda (a minor alien race indigenous to the realm) and other Federation races.

Though operating at TL13, the council is known, primarily, for its outstanding achievements in genetic engineering—the source of its primary exports. Its products range from modification in the human genome to tailored microorganisms. Part of its success is due to the nature of Jenda genetics and the fresh approach to the field.

The planet Sysix (2935), along the council's spinward edge, serves not only as a major trade world for Hiver goods, but is also supporting extensive Federation trade exploration ventures in the Aquila, Tempri, and Sontra subsectors. Recently, these missions have had some heated contact with Solomani traders working the spinward sectors, but tensions seemed to have dropped suddenly, without any apparent explanation.

THE OUTCASTS OF THE WHISPERING SKY

Undoubtedly one of the most enigmatic cultures in the sector, the Outcasts of the Whispering Sky (or Stalkers, as most humans call them, referring to their two-meter tall necks which jut up from their squat bodies) are an alien race which communicates by means of a bioluminescent organ. Their language consists of complex patterns of light which play across the surface of their eyecones.

Due to the nature of their communication abilities, they have long looked to the sky in wonder. It seemed to the Stalkers that the entire sky was alight with conversation, but it was so distant or was said so softly that no Stalker could make out what the sky was saying.

A complete understanding of Stalker psychology still eludes human scientists, but the best approximations that can be made indicate that the revelation of the Whispering Sky initiated a kind of racial paranoia/curiosity. As one sophontologist put it, "They seem to feel as if the entire universe is in on some cosmic joke that they're not allowed to hear."

It is this drive to understand the sky which brought them to the stars—initially expanding with a vengeance using sublight ships, then, later, jump-driven craft (obtained from Solomani traders, as the accepted theory goes). Once it became apparent that their answers were more remote than they'd believed, their expansion followed.

Contact with humans also served to frustrate them, as humans could only speak with mechanical aid. The Stalkers were, and still are, mistrustful of humans—perhaps feeling that the humans are "in on the joke."

The Stalkers are not warm to intrusions into their realm. This has led to frustration in the xenoarchaeological community, as what appears to be an unfinished Ancient's ringworld resides within the borders of the Outcasts of the Whispering Sky in the Leenitakot system (1432). Both Imperial and Solomani scientific communities are constantly negotiating for expedition rights, but to date only four have been granted.

The Stalker policy on unauthorized intrusion is simple: Destroy the intruders. Regardless, many free traders have risked their lives penetrating deep within the Stalker worlds for some unique spices and plant life which can be found nowhere else.

INDEPENDENT SYSTEMS

Spanning the vast reaches between these larger states are myriad independent systems—some supporting more massive, interstellar states, some isolated and completely self-reliant. Although many of these worlds are populated by humans of Solomani or Vilani descent, their cultures are uniquely different from that of the Imperium. Most of these worlds were settled at least 2000 years ago—more than enough time to develop a divergent character and lore.

Systems which have not enjoyed proximity to one of the major trade routes tend to be isolated and, in many cases, little-explored. Trade and technological support for such systems have fallen to the free traders, both Imperial and Solomani.

ECONOMICS

Although the sector is literally crisscrossed with trade routes, both large and small, three main routes have the greatest economic impact: the Bruia Diagonal (connecting the Imperium with the Hive Federation), the Alike Run (going from the Imperium to the trade nexus with the Two Thousand Worlds at Alike), and Byerley's Path (the Solomani route which services several high population centers of the sector and connects to Alike).

The sector buzzes with trade activity on all levels. Three major categories of trade can be defined: interempire (trade between the Federation, Imperium, Solomani, and Two Thousand Worlds), interstate (between the larger interstellar states), and intersystem (between independent words).

Commercial raiding (or "pirating") has always been a problem in the sector, especially when missions traverse some of the backwater stretches at the sector's heart. So far, none of the larger states have been concretely linked to any of this activity, although recent information seems to hint at subsidies by both the Solomani and Gniivi.

REBELLION PERIOD ACTIVITIES

Though the battles of the Rebellion have not been carried into the sector, some secondary effects of the conflict have

been felt. One of the major events was the shifting of the Federation-Imperium trade route (from Talia's Loop skirting about the Spinward edge, to The Bruia Diagonal cutting through the sector's middle) as the Solomani pushed into the Old Expanses sector.

The shift in traffic meant a shift in money and resources. Thus, systems which had been gearing their economics to service passing trade missions found their bread and butter gone and their importance in the grand scheme greatly reduced.

The hardest hit were the human-occupied systems in the Kandra subsector. With their economies in collapse, many of the worlds in that region have taken to raiding and warring amongst one another in a struggle for both power and survival. In some cases, the planetary governments of that area have been hiring mercenary companies for either offense or protection, but with their withering economies, the financial burden of such employment may prove too steep to continue.

Margaret's push to increase the mercantile activity of her domain has led to a rather extensive subsidized trade exploration program, probing out the sector's central region for untapped markets. The Solomani have also had an eye on harnessing new resources in the sector. The competition between these two trade factions has been fierce in the Bruia subsector, where their operational territories overlap.

Covert intelligence activity from both the Imperial and Solomani forces has been going on extensively in the spinward subsectors of the Hinterworlds, where both are waging a virtually invisible war with one another. Their activities have ranged from simple information gathering to subtle political manipulation, in order to sway a planet or government's allegiance.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

Beyond the obvious merchant adventures under the employ of a free trader or large trade corporation, a wide array of other challenging adventure premises greet adventurers. The rise in pirating activity opens the door to mercenary activities in both the naval and ground forces capacities. Mercenary companies could also find employment within the decaying Ral Ranta state or with the warring human worlds in the rimward area.

The sector is ripe for scientific adventures—not only in the explorations and analysis of the Ancient's ringworld at Leenitalot, but also in the investigation of the cultures and enigmas lurking in the sector's backwater.

With contact between three major empires, the existence of six independent nation-states, and eight indigenous minor races, characters with diplomatic backgrounds could be kept extremely busy—either on governmental missions or under the employ of a merchant corporation looking to open relations with a world for trade reasons.

As some worlds off the beaten path have little in the way of educational resources, many independent systems are always looking to employ personnel trained in technical or scientific fields. For example, characters with a background in medicine could easily find work either heading a metropolitan hospital on Saito or serving as a travelling general practitioner in the widely separated towns on Eskerson.

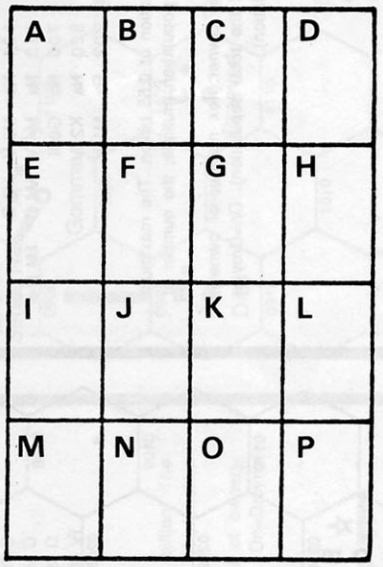
Filled with mystery and excitement, the environs of the Hinterworlds should supply an endless number and variety of adventures: military, mercantile, psionic, exploration, alien contact, and many others.

MAPS

The following pages include individual maps of all the subsectors of the Hinterworlds, along with a larger sector map. For the sake of clarity, the trade and communication routes shown on the subsector maps are those of the individual client states only. Trade routes of the larger empires are shown on the sector map.

Technically, all extra-Imperial worlds carry a TAS rating of "amber." Thus, all "amber-rated" systems shown carry a warning slightly greater than that of their Imperial counterparts.

Below is a diagram showing the layout of the Hinterworlds' subsectors and an explanation of the allegiance codes unique to this sector.



SUBSECTORS OF THE HINTERWORLDS

A. Adar
B. Tlianke
C. Anubis
D. Pendiash Ginshar
E. Cimeon
F. Darvis
G. Cromar
H. Menere's Reach
I. Nullia
J. Bruia
K. Silver Laurel
L. Sontra
K. Hashi
L. Kandra
M. Tempri
N. Aquila

Hinterworlds-Specific Allegiance Codes

Ac—Anubian Trade Coalition
Ra—Ral Ranta
Gi—Gniivi
Ow—Outcasts of the Whispering Sky
Lp—Council of Leh Perash
Cu—Cytrialin Unity

A world without an allegiance code indicates an Imperial or Imperial-allied world. Additional codes can be found in the Data Formats Table.

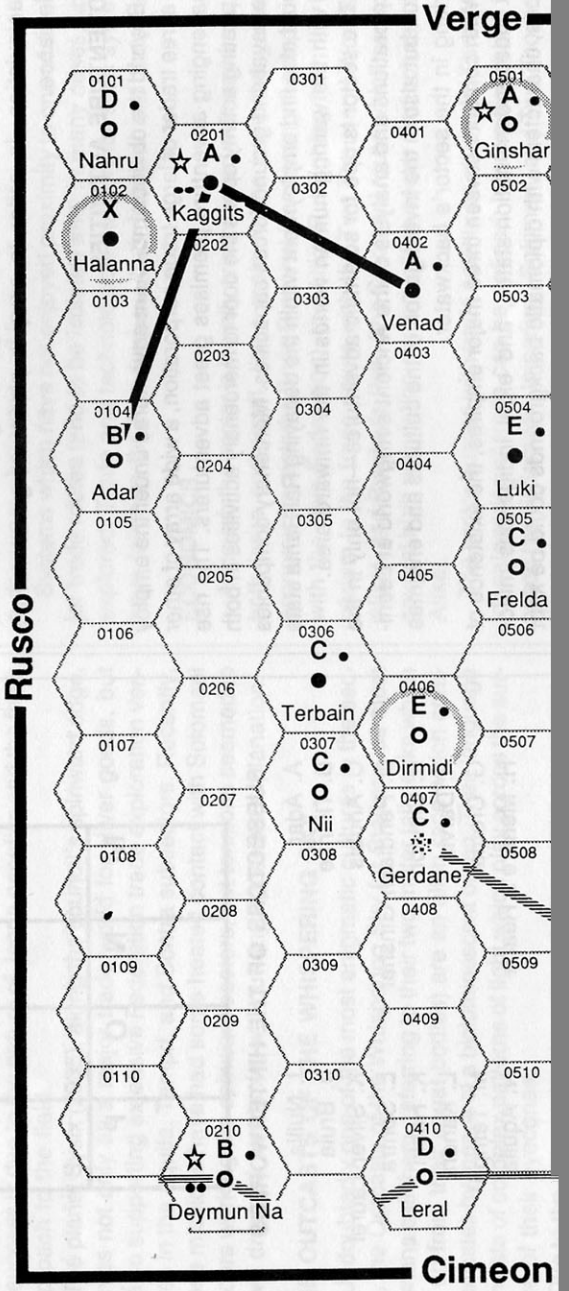
ADAR

The sum total of Imperial systems in the Hinterworlds is found in this subsector, with Adar serving as the sector capital as well as the subsector capital. A large quantity of Ral Ranta, with its power base centered at Deymun Na, dominates the subsector. The Ral Ranta-controlled jump-2 routes connecting all their worlds were disrupted when Imperial peacekeeping forces, responding to an uprising, occupied Venad in 1098 and declined to leave.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar*		
Nahru	0101	D100201-6		Lo Ni Va		703	Ra	G0 V	M8 D	
Halanna	0102	X62A442-5		Ni Wa	A	300	Ra	M3 V		
Adar	0104	B100456-A		Ni Va Cx		402	Im	M3 V	M5 D	
Kaggits	0201	A445300-B	F	Lo Ni		214	Ra	M7 V		
Deymun Na	0210	B110352-D	F	Lo Ni		104	Ra	K3 V	M5 V	
Terbain	0306	C98A523-6		Ni Wa		603	Na	K3 V	M9 D	
Nii	0307	C110599-C		Ni		803	Na	M1 V		
Venad	0402	A221621-B		Ni Po Na		324	Im	M0 V	M6 D	
Dirmidi	0406	E3107CE-4		Na	A	403	Na	M0 V	M0 D	
Gerdane	0407	C000110-7		Lo Ni As		901	Ra	M9 III	M7 D	
Leral	0410	D110411-9		Ni		921	Ra	A2 V		
Ginshar	0501	A410631-B	J	Ni Na	A	803	Na	K2 V		
Luki	0504	E79A758-7		Wa		604	Na	M4 V	M4 D	
Frelda	0505	C100441-8		Ni Va		812	Ra	M3 V		
Fugitak	0602	C5A027A-5		Lo Ni De	A	125	Na	F2 V	M3 D	
Dermif Na	0603	B442521-7	F	Ni Po		522	Ra	M0 V		
Luggi	0605	C6978AD-5				324	Ra	K0 V		
Sablass	0608	B6A0402-B	F	Ni De		803	Ra	M0 V		
Konn	0610	E555416-6		Ni		104	Na	G0 V	M7 D	
Pike	0708	A637644-8		Ni		104	Na	M3 V	M5 D	
Neuria	0710	E200444-8		Ni Va		112	Na	M4 V	M4 D	M4 D
Boilingbrook	0801	A9C9751-D				700	Na	G0 II		
Uumanur	0806	B552444-A	M	Ni Po		820	Na	K2 IV		
Salmri	0807	E769585-6		Ni	A	202	Ra	M1 V		

The Adar subsector contains 24 worlds with a total population of 0.55 billion. The maximum tech level for the subsector is D. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



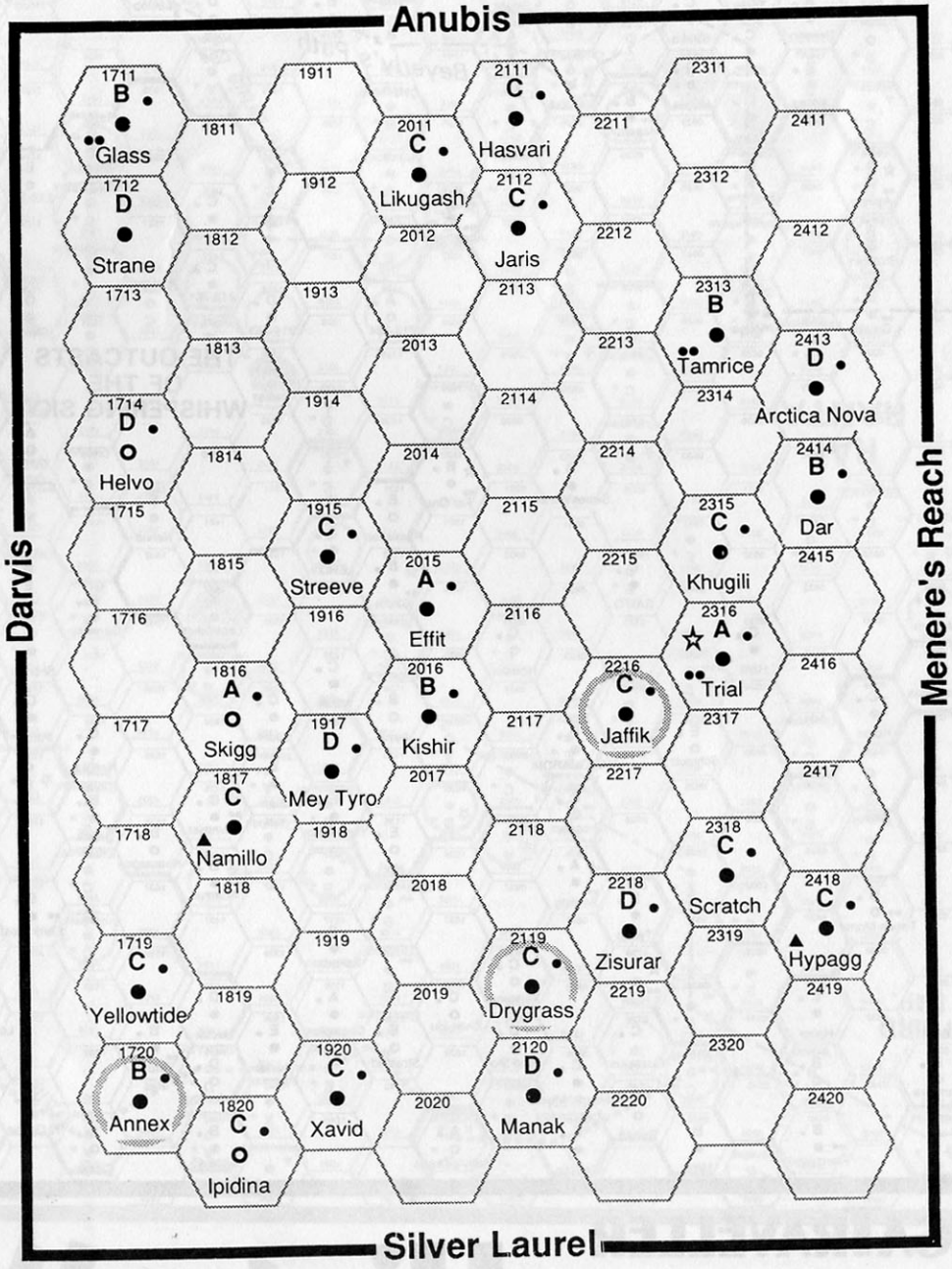
CROMAR

Margaret's recent interest in trade exploration is centered on developing the resources in this region.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Steliar*	*Data*
Glass	1711	B525856-A	M			822	Na	M1 V	M5 D
Strane	1712	D648865-1		O:1711		810	Na	M4 III	M0 D
Helvo	1714	D200852-6		Va Na		404	Na	F8 IV	
Yellowtide	1719	C363226-9		Lo Ni		904	Na	K8 V	M6 V
Annex	1720	B434300-C		Lo Ni	A	104	Na	K6 V	
Skigg	1816	A100120-D		Lo Ni Va		213	Na	M6 D	
Namillo	1817	C666341-9	S	Lo Ni		220	Na	M0 III	M8 D
Ipidina	1820	C3008B7-8		Va Na		711	Na	M3 V	M6 D
Streeve	1915	C99A698-8		Ni Wa		314	Na	G2 V	
Mey Tyro	1917	D534654-7		Ni		102	Na	G4 V	
Xavid	1920	C43579A-6				102	Na	G4 V	M8 D
Likugash	2011	C537477-A		Ni		423	Na	K4 V	
Effit	2015	A5936B6-A		Ni		104	Na	A4 V	
Kishir	2016	B73A344-A		Lo Ni Wa		701	Na	M6 V	
Hasvari	2111	C3245AC-7		Ni		204	Na	M7 III	
Jaris	2112	C354000-6		Lo Ni Ba		704	Na	A4 V	M4 D
Drygrass	2119	C546576-4		Ni Ag	A	214	Na	M7 VI	K9 D
Manak	2120	D433551-9		Ni Po		902	Na	K4 V	
Jaffik	2216	C9B2453-A		Ni	A	904	Na	M0 V	
Zisurar	2218	D522302-8		Lo Ni Po		902	Na	K9 V	
Tamrice	2313	B332496-A	M	Ni Po		320	Na	M1 V	
Khugili	2315	C445111-8		Lo Ni		304	Na	G6 VI	M6 D
Trial	2316	A363566-C	F	Ni O:2318		304	Na	G2 V	M2 D
Scratch	2318	C546354-6		Lo Ni		522	Na	M3 V	M6 D
Arctica Nova	2413	D529666-5		Ni O:2318		604	Na	M4 V	
Dar	2414	B666002-9		Lo Ni		623	Na	M0 IV	
Hypagg	2418	C474242-A	S	Lo Ni		414	Cs	K6 V	M8 D

Cromar subsector contains 27 worlds with a total population of 2.93 billion. The highest tech level is D at Skigg. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



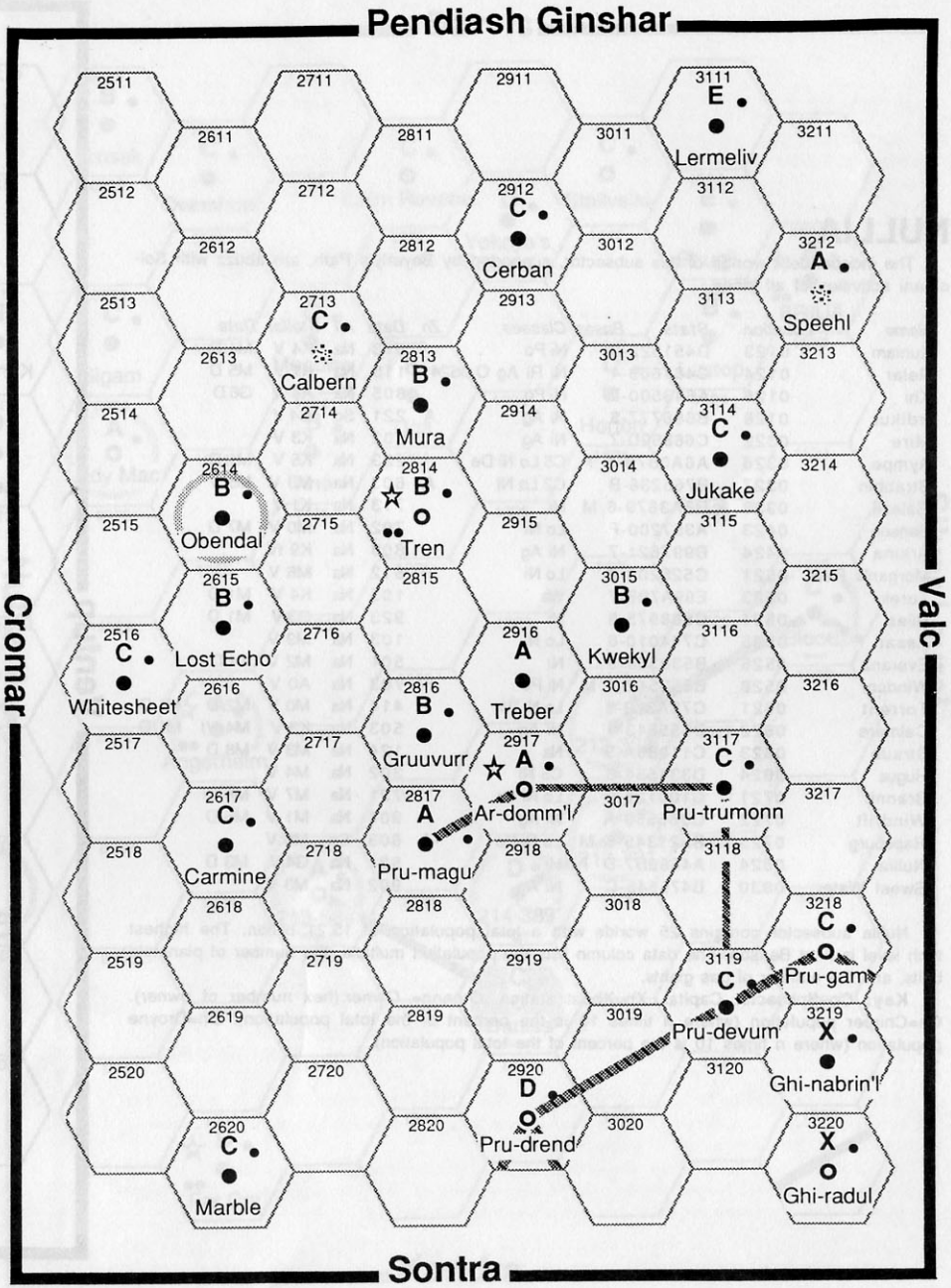
MENERE'S REACH

Named after famed Solomani explorer, Henri Menere, this subsector is known for its rich diversity of life forms—not the least of which is the Gnivvi. The Gnivvi worlds of Ghi-nabrin'l and Ghi-radul are forbidden from any unauthorized visitation. The reasons are unclear, but it seems that these worlds act as some kind of reservation.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar Data*	
Whitesheet	2516	C787303-5		Lo Ni		902	Na	G5 V	
Obendal	2614	B9D3431-7		Ni	A	504	Na	M4 V	
Lost Echo	2615	B376148-8		Lo Ni		303	Na	M9 V	
Carmine	2617	C7A2400-5		Ni		703	Na	K8 II	
Marble	2620	CAB4530-5		Ni		504	Na	A3 V	
Calbern	2713	C000543-A		Ni As		714	Na	K2 III	
Mura	2813	B884556-A		Ni Ag		523	Na	K2 V	
Tren	2814	B4007BG-B	F	Va Na		711	Na	M1 V	M6 D
Gruuvurr	2816	BAA9326-7		Lo Ni		904	Na	M3 III	K5 D
Pru-magu	2817	A9B2433-A		Ni		201	Gi	K6 IV	
Cerban	2912	C234420-A		Ni		521	Na	G4 V	M2 D
Treber	2916	A66A535-B		Ni Wa		610	Na	M3 V	
Ar-domm'l	2917	A100374-C	J	Lo Ni Va		614	Gi	K8 V	M2 D
Pru-drend	2920	D110564-A		Ni O:2917		525	Gi	K2 V	
Kwekyl	3015	B965645-8		Ni Ri Ag		104	Na	M1 IV	M5 VI
Lermeliv	3111	E534622-2		Ni		502	Cu	M0 V	
Jukake	3114	C778530-3		Ni Ag		503	Na	M2 V	M8 D M6 D
Pru-trumonn	3117	C543157-7		Lo Ni Po		404	Gi	K3 V	M6 D
Pru-devum	3119	C986666-6		Ni Ri Ag O:3117		914	Gi	M0 V	M2 D
Speehl	3212	A000245-D		Lo Ni As		504	Na	K2 V	
Pru-gam	3218	C100344-9		Lo Ni Va		602	Gi	G7 III	
Ghi-nabrin'l	3219	X527333-1		Lo Ni		702	Gi	M7 VI	
Ghi-radul	3220	X8A0325-0		Lo Ni De		203	Gi	M7 V	

The Menere's Reach subsector contains 23 worlds with a total population of 0.09 billion. The highest tech level is D at Speehl. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population)



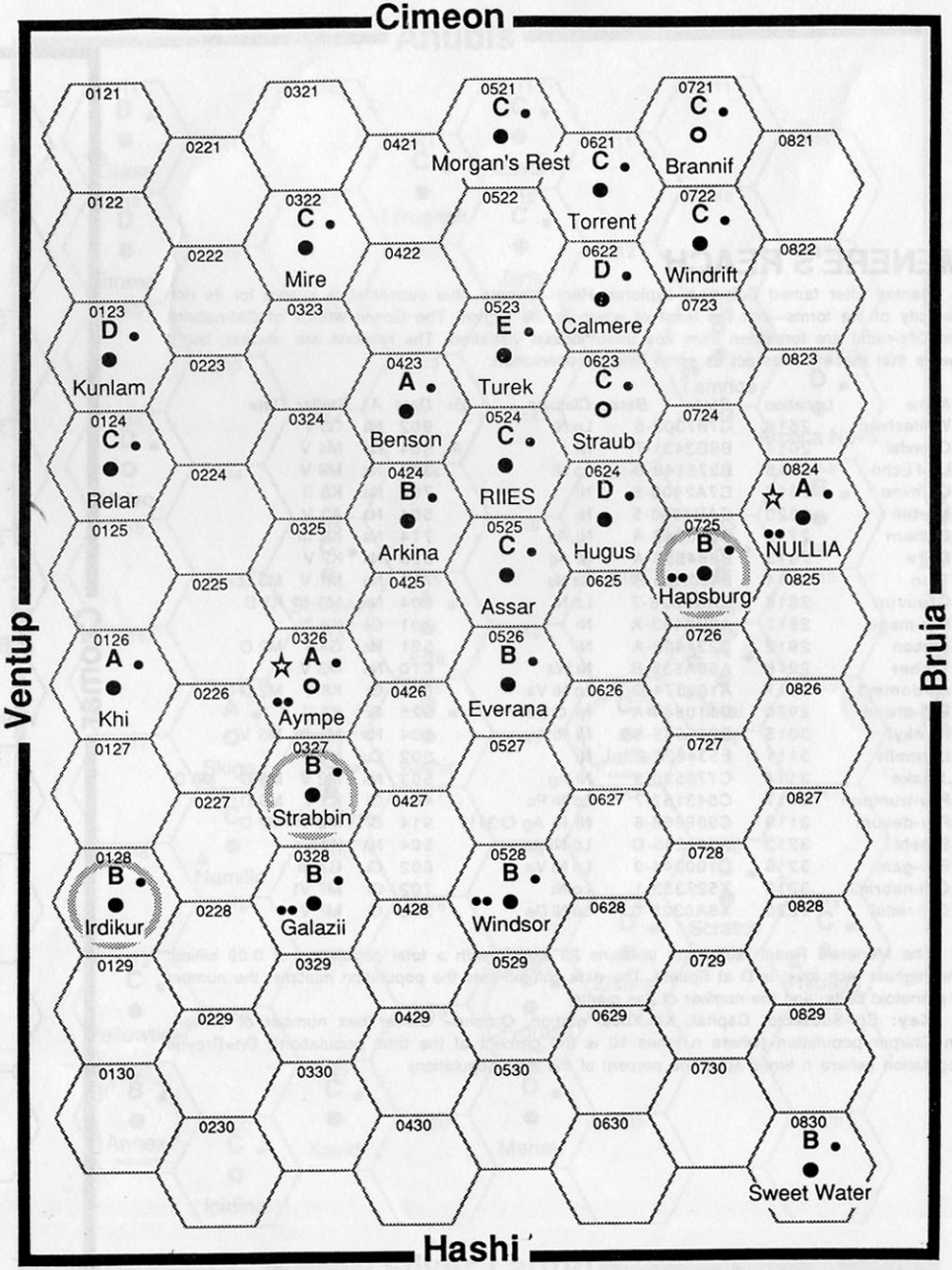
NULLIA

The independent worlds of this subsector, supported by Beyerly's Path, are abuzz with Solomani activities of all kinds.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar*	*Data*	
Kunlam	0123	D451522-3		Ni Po		613	Na	K4 V	M4 D	
Relar	0124	C467669-4		Ni Ri Ag O:0524		115	Na	K1 V	M5 D	
Khi	0126	A643500-B		Ni Po		805	Na	A4 V	G6 D	
Irdikur	0128	B666777-8		Ri Ag	A	221	So	G4 V		
Mire	0322	C66859D-7		Ni Ag		402	Na	K3 V		
Aympe	0326	A6A037A-9	F	C5 Lo Ni De		223	Na	K5 V	M1 D	
Strabbin	0327	B765236-B		C2 Lo Ni	A	603	Na	M3 V	M5 V	
Galazii	0328	B8A3679-6	M	Ni		713	Na	K1 V		
Benson	0423	A357200-F		Lo Ni		702	Na	M0 V	M7 D	
Arkina	0424	B997621-7		Ni Ag		803	Na	K9 IV		
Morgan's Rest	0521	C525200-9		Lo Ni		512	Na	M6 V		
Turek	0523	E89A7BB-7		Wa		103	Na	K4 V	M1 D	
Riies	0524	C888975-8		Hi		923	Na	G3 V	M1 D	
Assar	0525	C744010-6		Lo Ni		103	Na	M9 V		
Everana	0526	B538555-9		Ni		501	Na	M2 V	K4 D	
Windsor	0528	B652542-A	M	Ni Po		703	Na	A0 V		
Torrent	0621	C78A379-8		Lo Ni Wa		414	Na	M0 V	M2 D	M1 D
Calmere	0622	D655643-4		Ni Ag		503	Na	K3 V	M4 VI	M1 D
Straub	0623	C11088A-9		Na		124	Na	M3 V	M8 D	
Hugus	0624	D334554-8		C5 Ni		302	Na	M4 V		
Brannif	0721	C100126-9		Lo Ni Va		721	Na	M7 V	M6 D	
Windrift	0722	C366559-A		Ni Ag		904	Na	M1 V	M5 D	
Hapsburg	0725	B521345-8	M	Lo Ni Po	A	603	So	M0 V		
Nullia	0824	A4669B7-D	F	Hi		524	Na	G4 V	M3 D	
Sweet Water	0830	B475545-C		Ni Ag		902	Na	M3 V		

Nullia subsector contains 25 worlds with a total population of 15.21 billion. The highest tech level is F at Benson. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



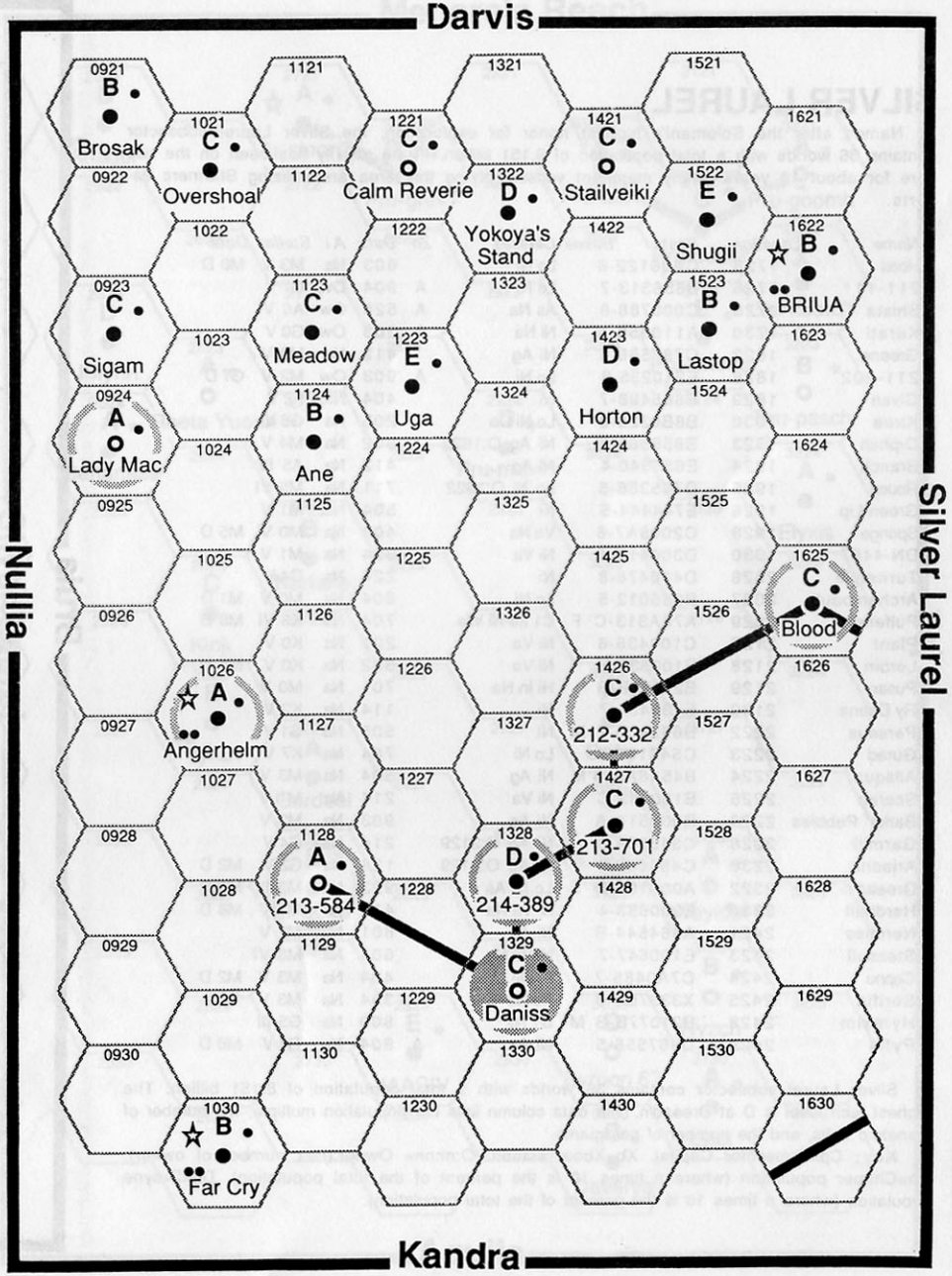
BRUIA

Briua acts as a nexus for the major Imperial and Solomani trade routes through the sector. The spinward edge of the Outcasts of the Whispering Sky encroaches on the central region.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar Data*	
Brosak	0921	B544576-A		Ni Ag		804	Na	M4 V	
Sigam	0923	C66A59C-A		Ni Wa		501	Na	K6 II	
Lady Mac	0924	A200320-A		Lo Ni Va	A	415	So	K2 V	M5 D
Overshoal	1021	C67A878-7		Wa		303	Na	K1 V	
Angerhelm	1026	A888699-9	F	Ni Ri Ag	A	402	Na	M0 V	
Far Cry	1030	B368500-B	F	Ni Ag		205	Na	M3 V	
Meadow	1123	C495654-7		Ni Ag		103	Na	G1 D	
Ane	1124	B684511-8		Ni Ag		713	Na	K6 IV	
213-584	1128	A100321-C		Lo Ni Va	A	204	Ow	K3 III	
Calm Reverie	1221	C110374-8		Lo Ni		702	Na	M7 V	
Uga	1223	E566740-3		Ri Ag		203	Na	M7 IV	M7 D
Yokoya's Stand	1322	D5A36B9-3		Ni		224	Na	M1 V	M9 D
214-389	1328	D75887B-6	A			414	Ow	M1 II	M6 V
Daniss	1329	C100312-8		Lo Ni Va	R	114	Ow	M1 V	M6 D
Stailveiki	1421	C100511-7		Ni Va		411	Na	M3 V	M9 D
Horton	1423	D668200-7		Lo Ni		305	Na	M9 V	K4 D
212-332	1426	C858100-7		Lo Ni	A	605	Ow	G2 VI	M5 D
213-701	1427	C694126-9		Lo Ni	A	103	Ow	G8 V	
Shugii	1522	E776620-3		Ni Ag		904	Na	M8 IV	
Lastop	1523	B344532-9		Ni Ag		303	Na	M3 V	
Briua	1622	B55199E-C	F	Hi Po		902	Na	M2 V	
Blood	1625	C766100-7		Lo Ni	A	204	Ow	M2 V	

Briua subsector contains 22 worlds with a total population of 10.34 billion. Bruia and the Outcast's world of 213-584 boast the subsector's highest tech level of C. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



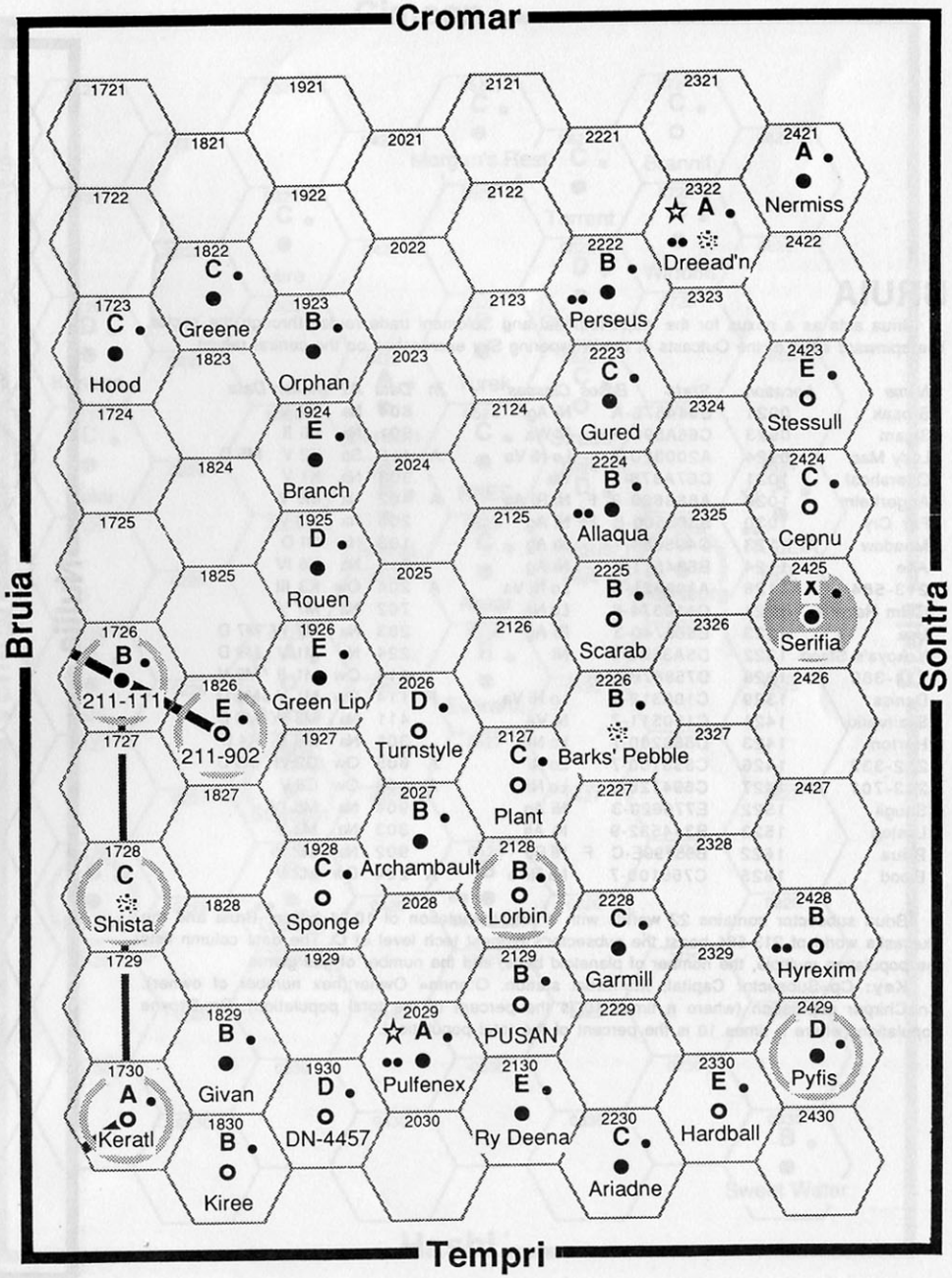
SILVER LAUREL

Named after the Solomani's highest honor for exploration, the Silver Laurel subsector contains 36 worlds with a total population of 8.151 billion. Pirate activity has been on the rise here for about 10 years. Many merchant vessels plying this area are utilizing Starmerc escorts.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar*	*Data*
Hood	1723	CA96122-6		Lo Ni		603	Na	M3 V	M0 D
211-111	1726	B656313-7		Lo Ni	A	904	Ow	G7 V	
Shista	1728	C000788-6		As Na	A	520	Ow	A6 VI	
Keratl	1730	A110658-A		Ni Na	A	303	Ow	G0 V	
Greene	1822	C787586-9		Ni Ag		412	Na	M3 V	
211-902	1826	E210235-8		Lo Ni	A	903	Ow	M2 V	G7 D
Givan	1829	B665488-7		Ni		404	Na	F2 V	
Kiree	1830	B8B0323-8		Lo Ni De		205	Na	G6 V	
Orphan	1923	B656565-7		Ni Ag O:1622		302	Na	M4 V	
Branch	1924	E655540-4		Ni Ag		412	Na	A5 IV	
Rouen	1925	D765366-5		Lo Ni O:1622		711	Na	M5 VI	
Green Lip	1926	E744444-5		Ni		504	Na	M1 V	
Sponge	1928	C2008A7-6		Va Na		403	Na	M0 V	M5 D
DN-4457	1930	D300410-4		Ni Va		324	Na	M1 V	
Turnstyle	2026	D410476-8		Ni		224	Na	G4 V	
Archambault	2027	B955012-5		Lo Ni		804	Na	M0 V	M1 D
Pulfenex	2029	A76A313-C	F	C1 Lo Ni Wa		704	Na	K6 VI	M8 D
Plant	2127	C100436-6		Ni Va		201	Na	K0 V	
Lorbin	2128	B100533-B		Ni Va	A	302	Na	K0 V	M7 D
Pusan	2129	B21098B-B		Hi In Na		701	Na	M0 V	
Ry Deena	2130	E435434-7		Ni		114	Na	K2 V	
Perseus	2222	B692400-7	M	Ni		505	Na	G1 V	
Gured	2223	C548100-7		Lo Ni		704	Na	K7 V	
Allaqua	2224	B4546AA-9	M	Ni Ag		504	Na	M3 V	
Scarab	2225	B100449-C		Ni Va		214	Na	M1 V	
Barks' Pebbles	2226	B000510-A		Ni As		903	Na	M3 V	
Garmill	2228	C345568-8		Ni Ag O:2129		214	Na	G4 V	
Ariadne	2230	C454669-4		Ni Ag O:2129		124	Na	G2 V	M2 D
Dreead'n	2322	A000100-D	F	Lo Ni As		923	Na	M2 IV	M6 V
Hardball	2330	E300653-4		Ni Va Na		413	Na	M1 V	M8 D
Nermiss	2421	A464544-B		Ni Ag		801	Na	M2 V	
Stessull	2423	E100647-7		Ni Va Na		604	Na	M8 VI	
Cepnu	2424	C7A0485-7		Ni De		404	Na	M3 V	M2 D
Serifia	2425	X3337C8-0		Po Na	R	304	Na	M3 V	
Hyrexim	2428	B21077B-B	M	D1 Na		800	Na	G5 III	
Pyfis	2429	D867556-5		Ni Ag	A	804	Na	G4 V	M8 D

Silver Laurel subsector contains 36 worlds with a total population of 8.151 billion. The highest tech level is D at Dreead'n. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



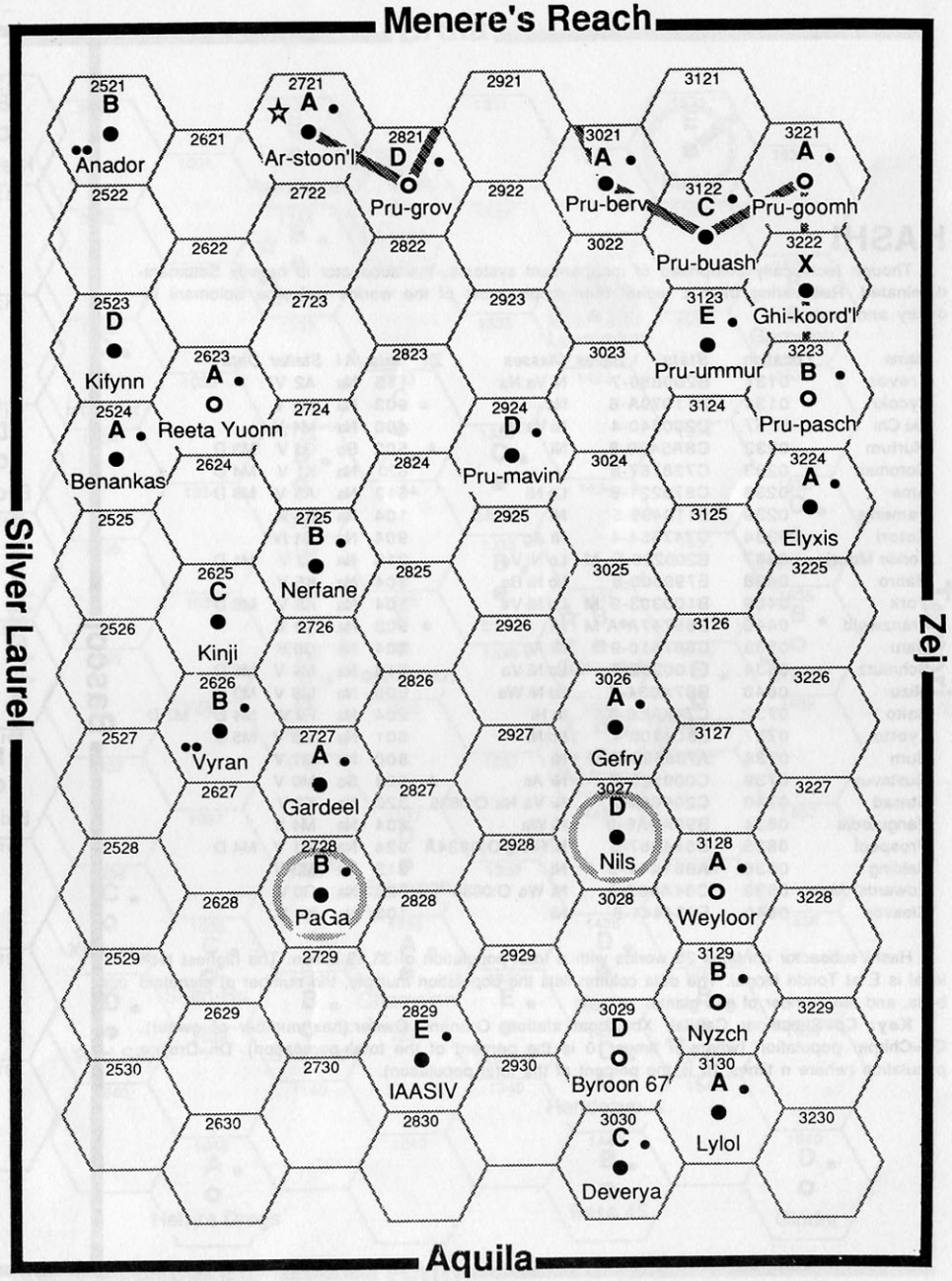
SONTRA

Sontra has a smattering of Gnivvi systems at its coreward extent.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar*	*Data*	
Anador	2521	B555524-8	M	Ni Ag		500	Na	M3 V	M6 D	M0 D
Kifynn	2523	D686455-5		Ni		400	Na	M0 V		
Benankas	2524	A7A3353-C		Lo Ni		903	Na	G6 V		
Reeta Yuonn	2623	A100025-D		Lo Ni Va		804	Na	M7 V		
Kinji	2625	C774231-7		Lo Ni		110	Na	M4 IV		
Vyran	2626	B552520-9	M	Ni Po		404	Na	M3 V		
Ar-stoon'l	2721	A7B2547-9	J	Ni		703	Gi	A1 V		
Nerfane	2725	B575645-5		C1 Ni Ag		604	Na	K3 V	M6 D	
Gardeel	2727	A7A2000-B		Lo Ni Ba		501	Na	K9 VI	M5 D	
PaGa	2728	B783787-6		Ri	A	603	Na	A2 II	M5 V	M5 D
Pru-grov	2821	D100788-7		Va Na		303	Gi	M1 V	M0 D	
Iaasiv	2829	EAC3AA9-B		Hi		603	Na	M0 V		
Pru-mavin	2924	D855887-2				204	Gi	G2 V		
Pru-berv	3021	A88A420-B		Ni Wa		203	Gi	K1 V		
Gefry	3026	A6A378B-8				603	Na	M0 V	M8 D	
Nils	3027	D859015-5		Lo Ni	A	400	Na	M5 V		
Byroon 67	3029	D300433-7		Ni Va		200	Na	M0 V	M5 D	
Deverya	3030	C995753-4		Ag		501	Na	M9 VI	M7 D	
Pru-buash	3122	C6A5473-9		Ni		904	Gi	M2 IV		
Pru-ummur	3123	E425241-7		Lo Ni		603	Gi	M0 V	M4 D	
Weyloor	3128	A200248-B		Lo Ni Va		204	Na	M3 VI	M4 D	
Nyzch	3129	B200435-B		Ni Va		313	Na	M4V	M3D	
Lylol	3130	A775313-8		Lo Ni		202	Na	M9 VI	M5 D	M1 D
Pru-goomh	3221	A100310-C		Lo Ni Va		504	Gi	M1 V	M4 D	
Ghi-koord'l	3222	X3728A9-0				200	Gi	G2 V	M7 D	
Pru-pasch	3223	B6A0488-C		Ni De		513	Gi	M0 V	K9 D	
Elyxis	3224	A65A551-D		Ni Wa		703	Na	F3 V		

Sontra subsector contains a total of 27 worlds with a combined population of 65.72 billion. The highest tech level is D. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



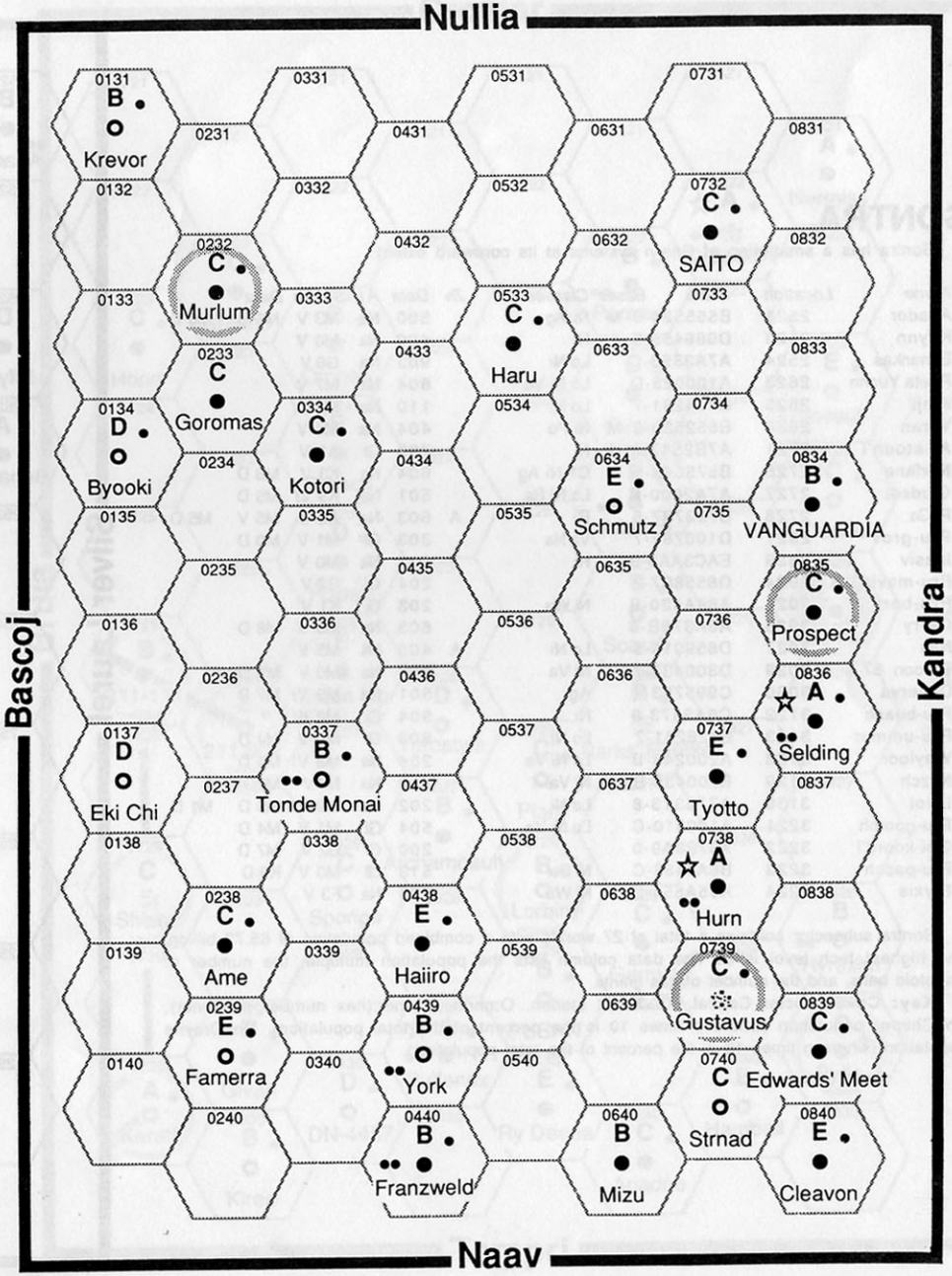
HASHI

Though technically comprised of independent systems, the subsector is heavily Solomani-dominated. Recovering from a recent depression, most of the worlds welcome Solomani industry and trade.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar Data*	
Krevor	0131	B200686-7		Ni Va Na		115	Na	A2 VI	
Byooki	0134	D11079A-6		Na		903	Na	M2 V	
Eki Chi	0137	D200640-4		Ni Va Na		400	Na	M4 V	
Murlum	0232	C8A5420-8		Ni	A	502	So	G1 V	M3 D
Goromas	0233	C728787-8				620	Na	K1 V	M4 D
Ame	0238	C876221-6		Lo Ni		513	Na	A3 V	M8 D
Famerra	0239	E110499-5		Ni		104	Na	F4 V	
Kotori	0334	C747654-4		Ni Ag		904	Na	G1 IV	
Tonde Monai	0337	B200200-E	M	Lo Ni Va		215	Na	F2 V	M1 D
Haiiro	0438	E799000-8		Lo Ni Ba		804	Na	K5 V	
York	0439	B100303-9	M	Lo Ni Va		104	Na	K8 V	M6 D
Franzweld	0440	B65747A-A	M	Ni		903	Na	A3 V	
Haru	0533	C667510-9		Ni Ag		104	Na	G0 V	
Schmutz	0634	E100202-7		Lo Ni Va		613	Na	M4 V	M6 D
Mizu	0640	B87A034-7		Lo Ni Wa		600	Na	M8 V	M3 D
Saito	0732	C748AC8-8		In Hi		204	Na	F9 V	M4 D M7 D
Tyotto	0737	E8C4100-4		Lo Ni		601	Na	M3 V	M5 D
Hurn	0738	A73659D-D	F	Ni		800	Na	M1 V	
Gustavus	0739	C000525-B		Ni As	A	504	So	M0 V	
Strnad	0740	C200664-7		Ni Va Na O:0835		320	Na	K2 V	
Vanguardia	0834	B99A9A8-9		Hi Wa		804	Na	M4 V	
Prospect	0835	C564667-5		Ni Ri Ag O:0834	A	924	Na	M1 V	M4 D
Selding	0836	A661444-9	F	Ni		812	Na	M3 V	
Edwards' Meet	0839	C64A667-9		Ni Wa O:0834		722	Na	G0 V	
Cleavon	0840	E434441-8		Ni		103	Na	K4 V	

Hashi subsector contains 25 worlds with a total population of 33.69 billion. The highest tech level is E at Tonde Monai. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



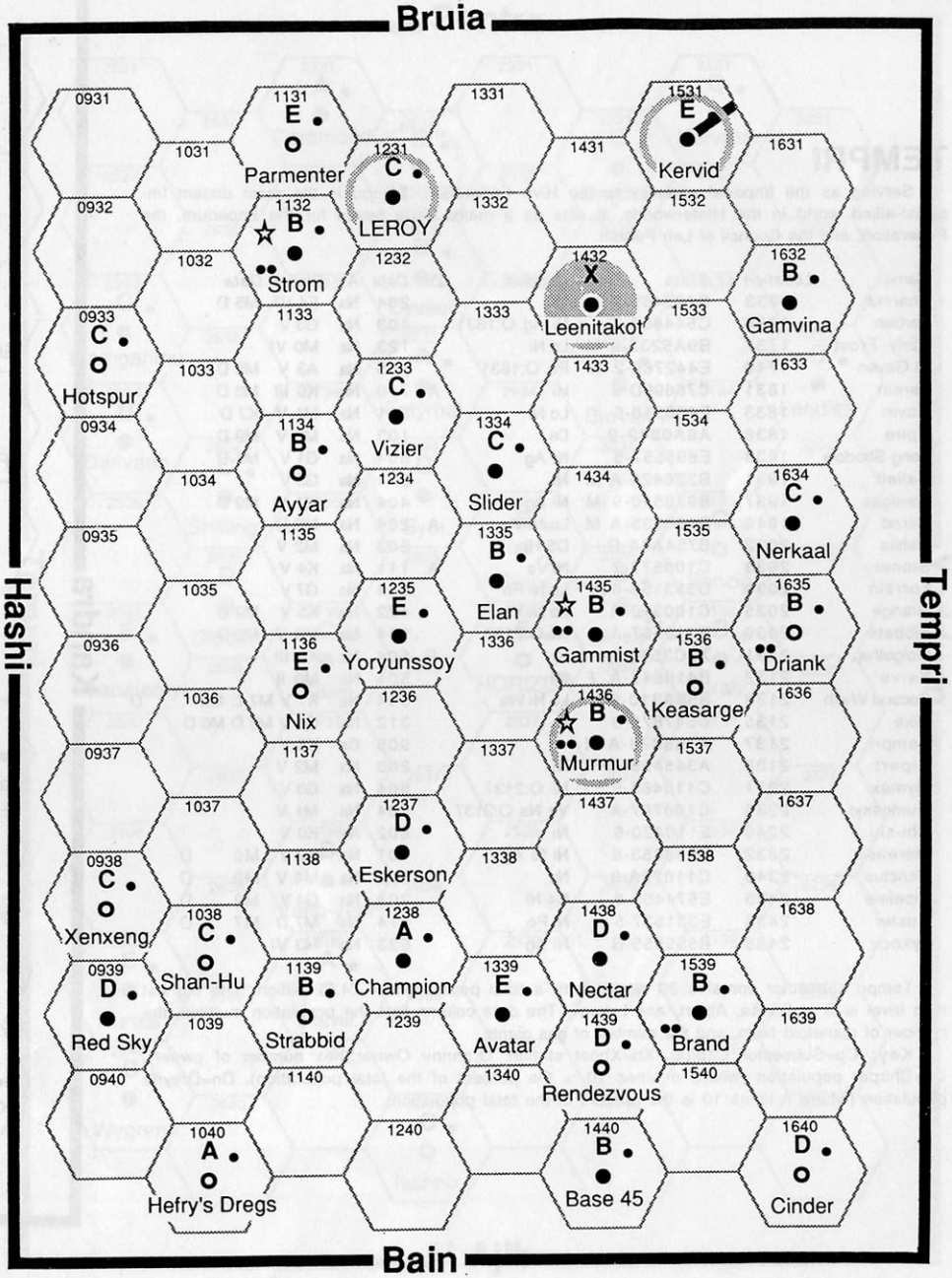
KANDRA

Leenitakot is the site of what appears to be an Ancient's ringworld, although system access is severely limited by the Outcasts of the Whispering Sky.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar Data*		
Hotspur	0933	C110569-A		Ni O:0834		504	Na	K2 V		
Xenxeng	0938	C100210-8		Lo Ni Va		312	Na	K9 V	M6 D	
Red Sky	0939	D56667A-4		Ni Ri Ag		302	Na	M6 III		
Shan-Hu	1038	C11058A-9		Ni		633	Na	M4 V		
Hefry's Dregs	1040	A100020-A		Lo Ni Va		503	Na	M8 V		
Parmenter	1131	E100235-9		Lo Ni Va		704	Na	K2 V		
Strom	1132	B461656-8	F	Ni Ri		603	Na	M1 V		
Ayyar	1134	B110144-C		C0 Lo Ni		312	Na	M4 II		
Nix	1136	E100200-7		Lo Ni Va		603	Na	G5 V	M5 D	
Strabbid	1139	B100842-8		Va Na		612	Na	M0 V		
Leroy	1231	C574969-9		Hi In O:1233	A	111	Na	G0 V	M4 D	
Vizier	1233	C52A220-9		Lo Ni Wa		104	Na	K4 V		
Yoryunssoy	1235	E254562-4		D5 Ni Ag O:1233		711	Na	G3 V		
Eskerson	1237	D222425-9		Ni Po		905	Na	K2 V		
Champion	1238	A889330-C		Lo Ni		803	Na	M4 V	M2 D	M0 D
Slider	1334	C588210-4		Lo Ni		203	Na	G0 V		
Elan	1335	B3218AC-A		Po Na		303	Na	M2 V		
Avatar	1339	E436000-7		Lo Ni Ba		604	Na	M9 V		
Leenitakot	1432	X77A6BB-1		C8 Ni Wa	R	310	Ow	K3 V	M7 D	
Gammist	1435	B551201-9	F	Lo Ni Po		403	Na	M5 V	M0 D	
Murmur	1436	B9B448B-A	F	Ni	A	704	So	M8 II	M2 IV	
Nectar	1438	D485776-7		Ri Ag		103	Na	M4 V		
Rendezvous	1439	D310033-6		Lo Ni		504	Na	G1 V	M4 D	
Base 45	1440	B351105-8		Lo Ni Po		304	Na	K0 V	M6 D	
Kervid	1531	E99A7CD-7		Wa	A	804	Ow	K0 V		
Keasarge	1536	B110253-A		Lo Ni		404	Na	M7 II		
Brand	1539	B4595A9-B	M	Ni		913	Na	M0 V	M9 D	M9 D
Gamvina	1632	B94A6BE-9		Ni Wa		903	Na	M1 V		
Nerkaal	1634	C422637-5		Ni Po Na		904	Na	F2 V	M5 D	
Driank	1635	B110455-D	M	Ni		504	Na	M2 V	M2 D	
Cinder	1640	D300387-6		Lo Ni Va		404	Na	M2 V		

Kandra subsector contains 31 worlds with a total population of 2.63 billion. The highest tech level is D at Driank. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



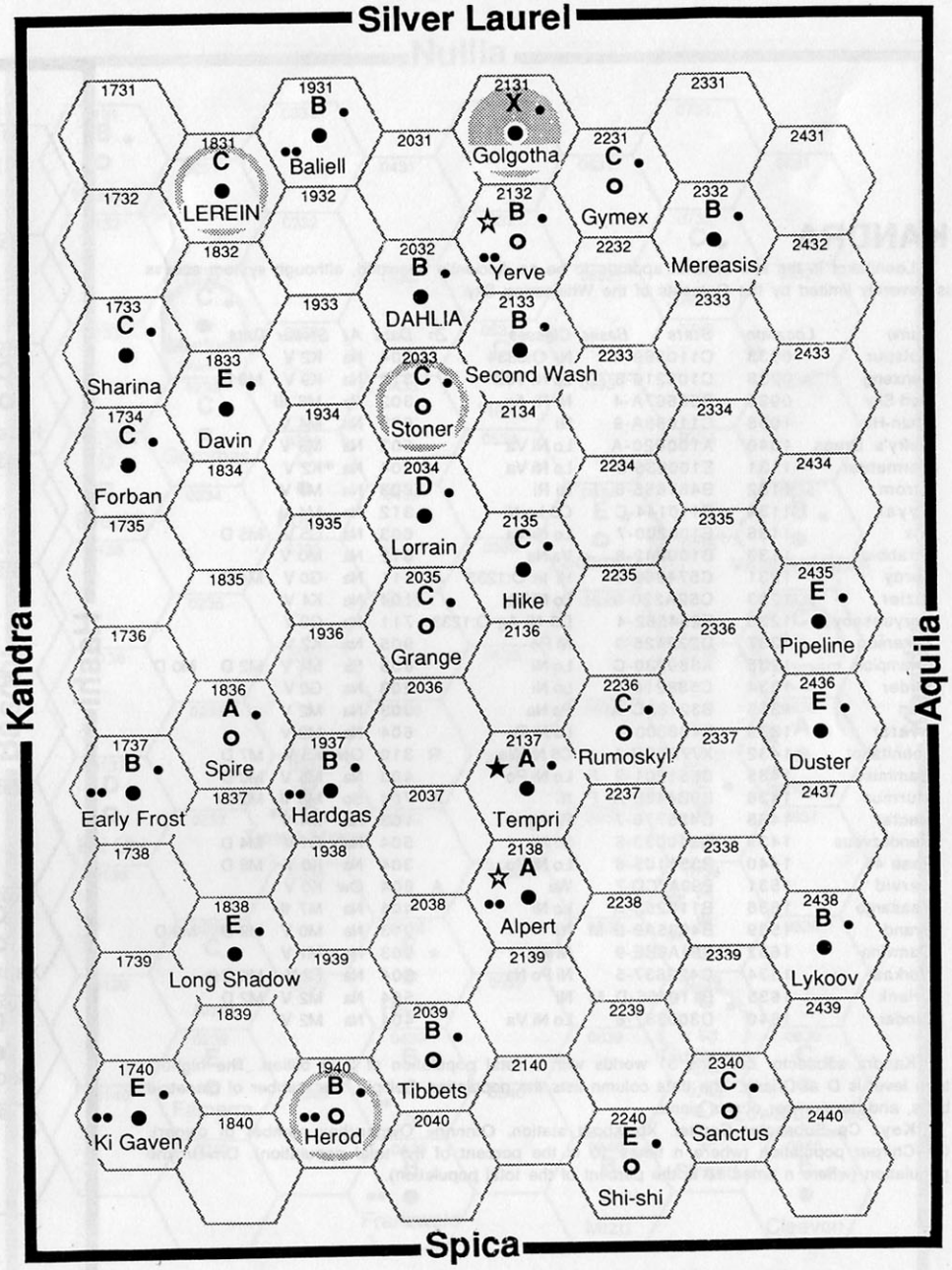
TEMPRI

Serving as the Imperial gateway to the Hive Federation, Tempri is the most distant Imperial-allied world in the Hinterworlds. It acts as a major trade nexus for the Imperium, the Federation, and the Council of Leh Perash.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar Data*
Sharina	1733	C725455-9		Ni		204	Na	F4 VI M5 D
Forban	1734	C544663-7		Ni Ag O:1831		403	Na	G3 V
Early Frost	1737	B9A5233-9	M	Lo Ni		123	Na	M0 VI
Ki Gaven	1740	E442769-2	M	Po O:1831		105	Na	A3 V M5 D
Lerein	1831	C76699D-5		Hi	A	710	Na	K6 III M0 D
Davin	1833	E436310-6		Lo Ni		801	Na	M1 V K7 D
Spire	1836	A6A0842-9		De		103	Na	M3 V M9 D
Long Shadow	1838	E895557-5		Ni Ag		804	Na	G1 V M4 D
Baliell	1931	B226425-A	M	Ni		214	Na	G3 V
Hardgas	1937	B978510-9	M	Ni Ag		404	Na	M1 V M9 D
Herod	1940	B100335-A	M	Lo Ni Va	A	204	Na	M2 D
Dahlia	2032	B754A8A-B		D5 Hi		603	Na	M2 V
Stoner	2033	C100577-7		Ni Va	A	111	Na	K4 V
Lorrain	2034	D553156-6		Lo Ni Po		914	Na	G7 V
Grange	2035	C100310-A		Lo Ni Va		422	Na	K5 V M9 D
Tibbets	2039	B310567-A		Ni O:2137		504	Na	M9 VI M2 D
Golgotha	2131	X8C3536-2		Ni	R	504	Na	K6 III
Yerve	2132	B410847-A	F	Na		501	Na	M0 II
Second Wash	2133	B58A310-9		Lo Ni Wa		504	Na	K1 V M7 D M0 D
Hike	2135	C547879-3				312	Na	G1 V M8 D M0 D
Tempri	2137	A758878-A	N			905	Cs	K3 V
Alpert	2138	A345458-B	F	Ni		200	Na	M2 V
Gymex	2231	C110467-6		Ni O:2137		804	Na	G3 V
Rumoskyl	2236	C100767-A		Va Na O:2137		504	Na	M1 V
Shi-shi	2240	E110420-6		Ni		602	Na	K0 V
Mereasis	2332	B868653-8		Ni Ri Ag		701	Na	K3 V M0 D
Sanctus	2340	C11078A-8		Na		303	Na	M4 V M0 D
Pipeline	2435	E574453-8		C4 Ni		203	Na	G4 V M2 D
Duster	2436	E331537-5		Ni Po		914	Na	M7 D M7 D
Lykoov	2438	B555555-B		Ni Ag		623	Na	M3 VI

Tempri subsector contains 30 worlds with a total population of 74.62 billion. The highest tech level is B at Dahlia, Alpert, and Lykoov. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



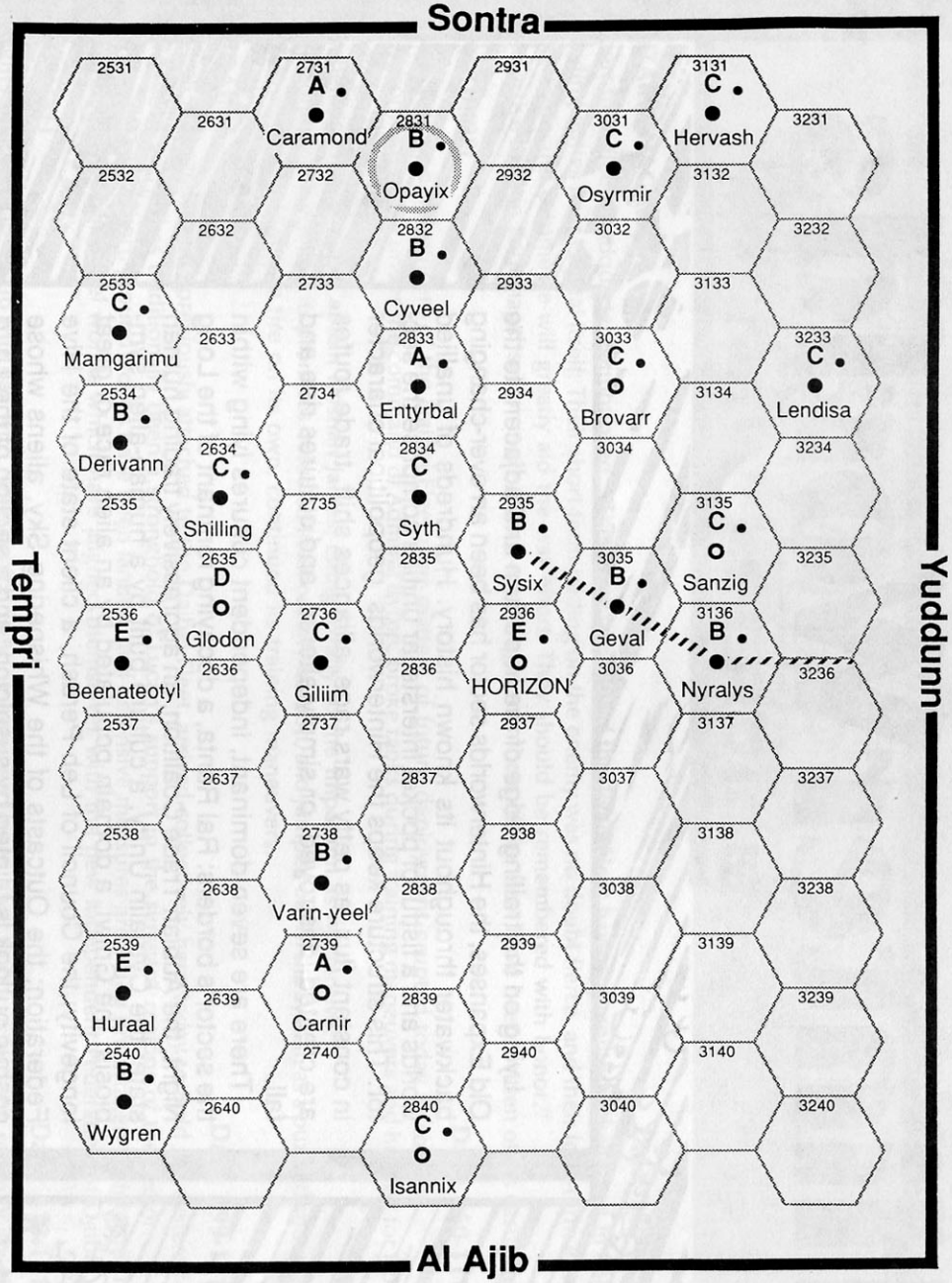
AQUILA

Protruding from the trailing side, a number of the systems associated with the Council of Leh Perash point to this subsector's heart. In this region, Federation activity is just as common as that of any human states.

Name	*Location*	*Stats*	*Bases*	*Classes*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*	*Stellar Data*
Mamgarimu	2533	C68479B-4		D3 Ri Ag		404	Na	M0 III
Derivann	2534	B85A210-9		Lo Ni Wa		203	Na	K8 V
Beenateotyl	2536	E772132-5		Lo Ni		703	Na	M9 V
Huraal	2539	E698143-6		Lo Ni		111	Na	K7 V
Wygren	2540	B884350-9		Lo Ni		524	Na	K6 V
Shilling	2634	C789774-4		Ri		903	Na	M0 V M2 D
Glodon	2635	D400501-4		Ni Va		600	Na	M6 IV
Caramond	2731	A534454-B		Ni		502	Na	G2 V
Giliim	2736	C7A3435-9		Ni		803	Na	K3 V M9 D
Varin-yeel	2738	B353630-A		Ni Po		714	Na	M1 V
Carnir	2739	A11045A-D		Ni		714	Na	K1 V
Opayix	2831	B422513-8		Ni Po	A	323	Na	K6 IV
Cyveel	2832	BA5A203-B		Lo Ni Wa		313	Na	M4 V
Entyrbal	2833	A579410-A		C1 Ni		712	Na	F0 V
Syth	2834	C8C8853-6				110	Na	K2 V M2 D
Isannix	2840	C110546-8		Ni		524	Na	M0 V
Sysix	2935	B623300-B		Lo Ni Po		624	Lp	M7 V
Horizon	2936	E20099B-9		Hi In Va Na		204	Lp	K1 V
Osyrmir	3031	C6B1677-7		Ni		103	Na	K2 V
Brovarr	3033	C100876-7		Va Na		824	Na	K4 V
Geval	3035	B426777-C				112	Lp	M6 IV
Hervash	3131	C88A79B-5		Ri Wa		702	Na	M3 V
Sanzig	3135	C300867-A		Va Na O:3131		103	Lp	G2 V M3 D
Nyralys	3136	B4448BC-9				704	Lp	M0 V M4 D
Lendisa	3233	C785556-A		Ni Ag		104	Lp	M1 V M4 D

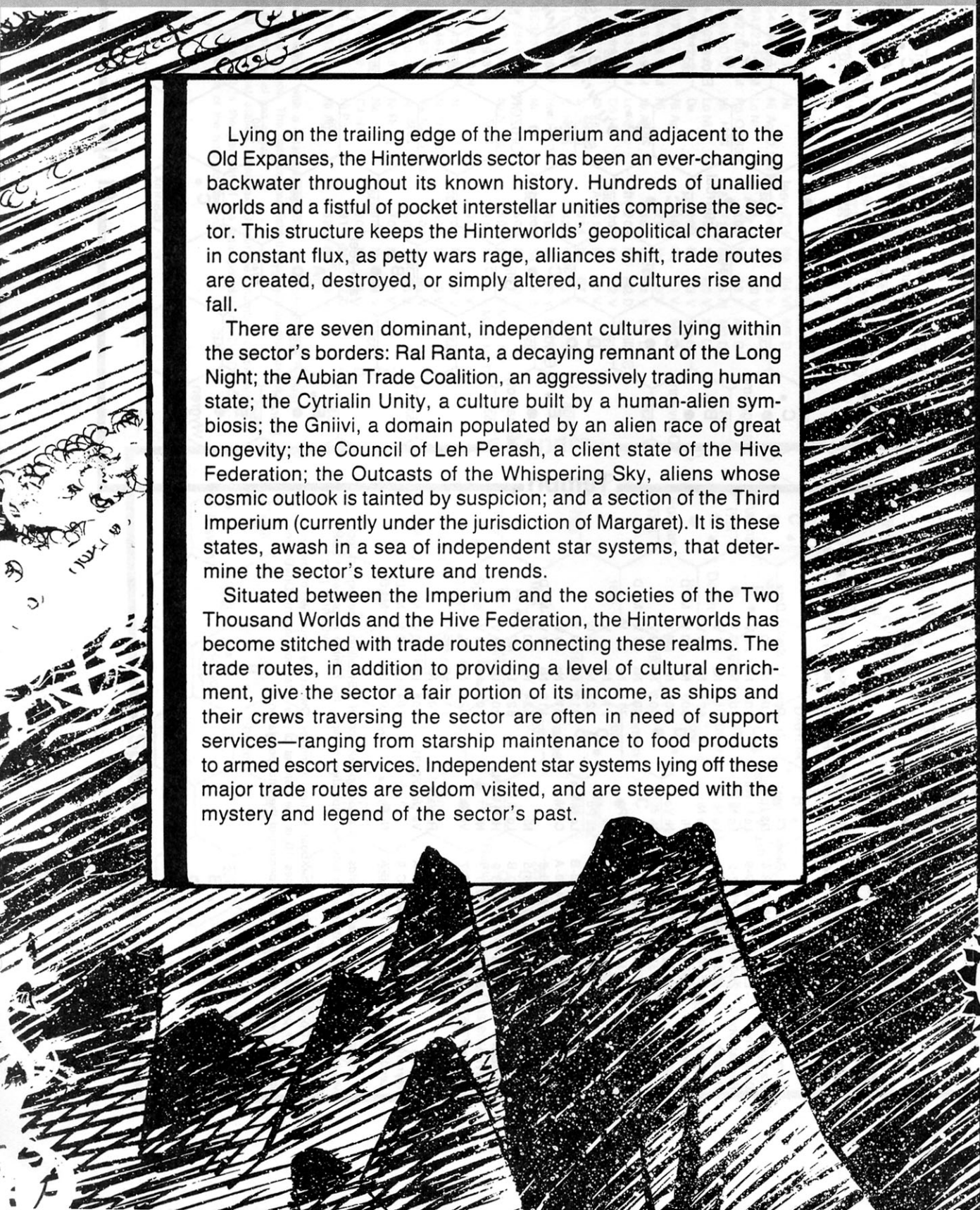
Aquila subsector contains 25 worlds with a total population of 4.64 billion. The highest tech level is D at Carnir. The data column lists the population multiple, the number of planetoid belts, and the number of gas giants.

Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:nnnn= Owner:(hex number of owner). Cn=Chirper population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population). Dn=Droyne population (where n times 10 is the percent of the total population).



MEGATRAVELLER™

HinterWorlds



Lying on the trailing edge of the Imperium and adjacent to the Old Expanses, the Hinterworlds sector has been an ever-changing backwater throughout its known history. Hundreds of unallied worlds and a fistful of pocket interstellar unities comprise the sector. This structure keeps the Hinterworlds' geopolitical character in constant flux, as petty wars rage, alliances shift, trade routes are created, destroyed, or simply altered, and cultures rise and fall.

There are seven dominant, independent cultures lying within the sector's borders: Ral Ranta, a decaying remnant of the Long Night; the Aubian Trade Coalition, an aggressively trading human state; the Cytrialin Unity, a culture built by a human-alien symbiosis; the Gniivi, a domain populated by an alien race of great longevity; the Council of Leh Perash, a client state of the Hive Federation; the Outcasts of the Whispering Sky, aliens whose cosmic outlook is tainted by suspicion; and a section of the Third Imperium (currently under the jurisdiction of Margaret). It is these states, awash in a sea of independent star systems, that determine the sector's texture and trends.

Situated between the Imperium and the societies of the Two Thousand Worlds and the Hive Federation, the Hinterworlds has become stitched with trade routes connecting these realms. The trade routes, in addition to providing a level of cultural enrichment, give the sector a fair portion of its income, as ships and their crews traversing the sector are often in need of support services—ranging from starship maintenance to food products to armed escort services. Independent star systems lying off these major trade routes are seldom visited, and are steeped with the mystery and legend of the sector's past.

TRAVELLER NEWS SERVICE

LIASDI/ZARUSHAGAR **Date: 258-1118**

¶A report from fleet headquarters announced, "The brave warriors of the 166th Fleet have apparently all been lost in commerce raiding duties near Capital itself. Their short-term raiding on the enemy was no doubt fierce, and their long-term effect on enemy trade and commerce will greatly aid the war effort. They should be remembered with honor."

¶Due to arrive back in Zarushagar sector more than a month ago, members of the fleet have been written off as casualties.

AMDANI/DAIBEI **Date: 260-1118**

¶Division among naval officers of the Daibei Fleet over matters of future deployment erupted today in conflict.

¶A squadron, ostensibly under the command of Admiral Byron, broke ranks during training maneuvers and headed for frontier refueling.

¶The rebellion was lead by Captain Kristian James, citing loyalty to the Imperium as his motive.

¶The squadron made good on its promises, refueled in an orderly fashion, and jumped out of the system as a puzzled squadron of Daibei loyalists, unwilling to fire on its own, continued its training maneuvers.

NARYA/DAIBEI **Date: 299-1118**

¶The 111th and 176th fleets, previously attached to the Daibei Fleet, arrived collectively here today to hold the system for Imperial control. Narya has traditionally been a stronghold of Lucan's support in the rimward regions of the sector.

¶Gaining popular support, ground troops have been landed, and defensive measures are being undertaken to fight off the inevitable retaliation from rebel worlds which have aligned themselves with the new independent Federation of Daibei.

NARYA/DAIBEI **Date: 312-1118**

¶The lights of Daibei are lit up this day with close orbital fighting between forces loyal to Lucan and the recently arrived Daibei Fleet squadrons.

¶A thorn in the side of the new federation, this battle is seen as a test of that union's strength and will to survive.

¶Initial reports say that overwhelming strength is breaking down the system's defenses, and that ships loyal to Lucan are unable to continue the battle and have retreated out of the system. However, it is doubtful that the Daibei Fleet carries sufficient ground-attack elements to take the planet without a lengthy siege and bombardment.

DISI/ZARUSHAGAR **Date: 332-1118**

¶Vowing that vengeance will be had against the Daibei rebels, Lucan's Fleet—consisting mostly of the 259th, 6th, and 240th reserve fleets diverted from service against Dulinor—has finally reached and engaged its enemy.

¶Daibei ships in the system put up a tenacious fight but were eventually forced to withdraw in the face of superior numbers.

¶"It's not that we couldn't match them in quality of ships," said Ensign Louis Hutura, an officer on a patrol vessel. "Their equipment is substandard and out of date, but there's just so much of it!"

MEDURMA/DAGUDASHAAG **Date: 344-1118**

¶The Admiralty today announced major gains against Dulinor's deep penetration raiders operating in both Core and Dagudashaag sectors.

¶To date, merchant vessels totaling more than two million tons have been destroyed in the dangerous trade corridor between Medurma and the rimward edge of Lishun sector.

¶Major portions of the enemy fleet are apparently turning back because of concerted drives against their supply and coordination bases over the last three months.

¶In the face of crippling losses in major engagements against the Vengeance Fleet earlier this year, most of the commerce raiders are expected to sortie back toward their own lines.

PHALN/GUSHEMEGE **Date: 360-1118**

¶The Second Battle of Phaln has finally ended in a decisive victory for the forces of Strephon.

¶Three of Lucan's fleets engaged an undetermined number of rebellious ships in the system beginning on 328-1118. The struggle for the system has taken more than a month since the first engagements.

¶The battle was one characterized by smaller squadron actions rather than being a set piece contest.

¶In the end, attrition forced Lucan's fleets to withdraw, after having lost nearly 100 vessels to the fanatical forces of Strephon.

¶Reports on Strephon's losses are unavailable but are suspected to be less than half those of Lucan's fleets. Ω

The American Marines

C. W. Hess



By the 23rd century, with America and her colonies located light-years apart, the availability of a well trained, mobile fighting force is a necessity.

At one time in history, when nations were still confined to earth, America employed an organization called RDJTF (Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force). The RDJTF, or RDF, as it was often referred to, was a loosely organized combination of units which was always prepared to be mobilized at a moment's notice. The combat units available to RDF consisted of army airborne divisions, air force wings, and a marine amphibious force (MAF).

Today, a similar organization exists, though under the title of ART (American Response Team). While this unit is capable of deploying troops anywhere on earth within hours, it does not possess the ability to respond to situations off-world without considerable preparation. Enter the US Marine Corps....

THE US MARINE CORPS

The US Marine Corps is an elite fighting force of about 200,000 people. Their mission is to provide America and her colonies with a mobile, highly responsive, highly trained military ground force. Unlike the American army, the marines are equipped to be quickly deployed into crisis areas by sea navy and space force assets. Also unlike the American army, which places a heavy reliance on ground-based logistics, the marines handle logistics aboard ship, thus maintaining the force's high mobility.

The employment of units with large amounts of ground-based support involves a certain level of commitment, since the units require a large effort to pull them back out. Such commitment can easily lead to an escalation of forces. In cases where it becomes apparent that American forces cannot be easily withdrawn from a dangerous situation, additional support often becomes necessary in order to protect those locked-in assets when, in fact, a withdrawal would be more desirable.

The ability of the marines to quickly pull out of a dangerous situation has saved America from a number of costly or potentially costly situations. Today, the corps maintains its rapid response capability, but as America expanded into space, so too did the marines.

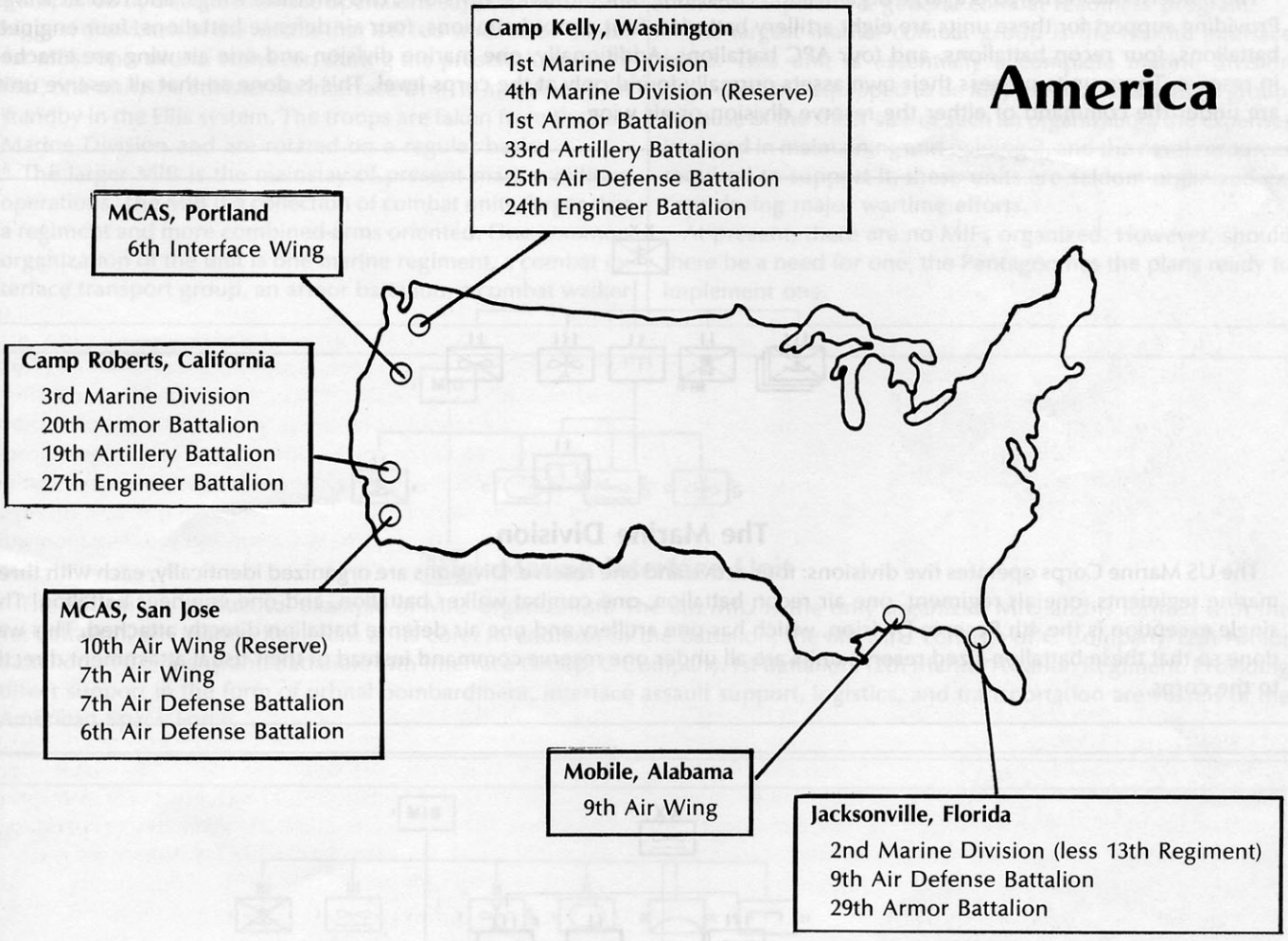


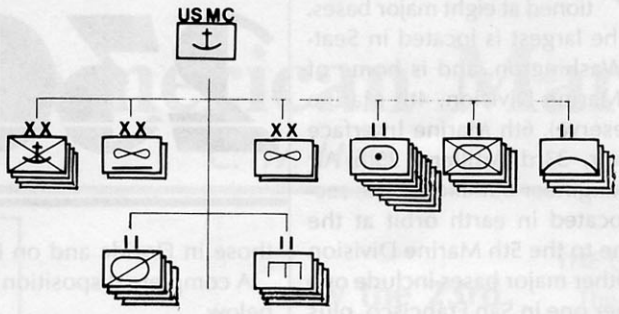
Marine Bases

Marine units are stationed at eight major bases. The largest is located in Seattle, Washington, and is home of the 1st Marine Division, 4th Marine Division (Reserve), 6th Marine Interface Wing, 1st Armor, 33rd Artillery, 25th Air Defense, and 24th Engineer battalions. The second largest base is located in earth orbit at the American L-4 colony, home to the 5th Marine Division and the 8th Interface Wing. Other major bases include one which is located in Hawaii, another one in San Francisco, plus those in Florida and on Ellis.

A complete disposition list is shown on the map of America below.

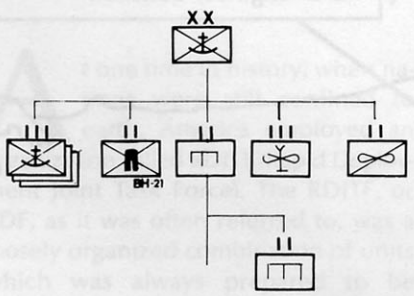
2300AD





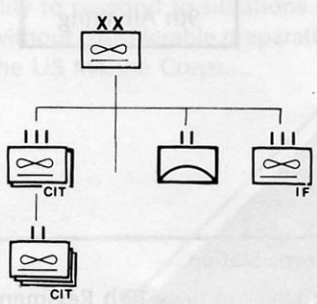
Organization

The modern marine corps is a large organization consisting of four marine divisions, two interface wings, and two air wings. Providing support for these units are eight artillery batteries, four armor battalions, four air defense battalions, four engineer battalions, four recon battalions, and four APC battalions. Additionally, one marine division and one air wing are attached in reserve. These units possess their own assets normally found only at the corps level. This is done so that all reserve units are under the command of either the reserve division or air wing.



The Marine Division

The US Marine Corps operates five divisions: four active and one reserve. Divisions are organized identically, each with three marine regiments, one air regiment, one air recon battalion, one combat walker battalion, and one engineer battalion. The single exception is the 4th Reserve Division, which has one artillery and one air defense battalion directly attached. This was done so that these battalion-sized reserve units are all under one reserve command instead of their usual attachment directly to the corps.



Marine Interface Wing

The marine interface wing and marine air wings are division-sized units organized to provide interface and/or air support to their corresponding marine divisions during combat. A total of two interface wings and two air wings are in active service in the corps, with one additional air wing operating as a reserve unit. Each interface wing is organized into two combat interface transport groups, an interface fighter group, and an air defense battalion.

2300AD

Organizations

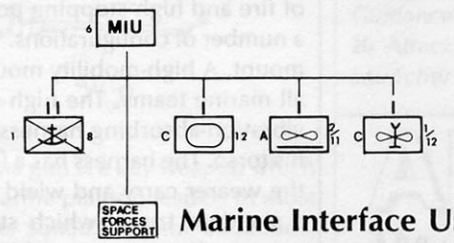
While the marine corps is formally organized into divisions, in most modern actions, a special combat group is formed. There are three types of groups used in off-world operations. These are the marine interface unit (MIU), the marine interface brigade (MIB), and the marine interface force (MIF).

The smallest of these groups is the MIU, which is formed around a single marine battalion and generally supported by divisional air assets and armor. The MIU is a strong, flexible, battalion-strength force, possessing a high degree of mobility. With a low total strength of troops, the MIU is easily transported by a single interface operations support vessel. The biggest drawback of the MIU is that it is too small to be useful for most operations. However, during the present Kafer conflict, one unit, the 6th Marine Interface Unit, is maintained on standby in the Ellis system. The troops are taken from the 2nd Marine Division and are rotated on a regular basis.

The larger MIB is the mainstay of present marine military operations. The MIB is a collection of combat units, larger that a regiment and more combined-arms oriented. One common organization of the unit is one marine regiment, a combat interface transport group, an armor battalion, a combat walker battalion, and an air defense battalion. At the outbreak of the Kafer War, the US Marine Corps organized the 7th Marine Interface Brigade and maintains the unit in full readiness at the American L-4 colony. Recently, this unit has been reinforced with fresh troops and updated equipment. The Pentagon claims that this is part of a general combat readiness program.

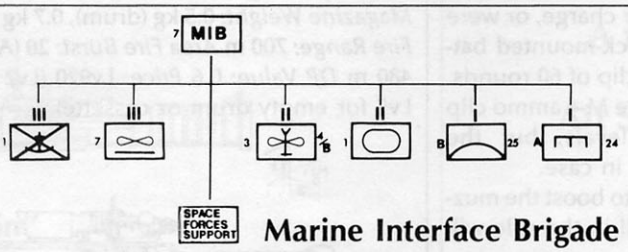
The largest marine combat group is the marine interface force. This unit is essentially a complete marine division organized and equipped to be fully mobilized as a single group. Because of the sheer size of such an organization, the expenses incurred in maintaining and fielding it, and the naval resources required to support it, these units are seldom organized except during major wartime efforts.

At present, there are no MIFs organized. However, should there be a need for one, the Pentagon has the plans ready to implement one.



Marine Interface Unit

The 6th MIU is a practical example of MIU organization. The 6th MIU is the only organized MIU and is formed with the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment at its core. In addition to the battalion, the 6th MIU consists of C Company/12th Armor Battalion, A Company/2nd Battalion/11th Interface Group, C Company/1st Battalion/12th Marine Aviation Regiment. Providing direct support in the form of orbital bombardment, interface assault support, logistics, and transportation are vessels of the American Space Force.



Marine Interface Brigade

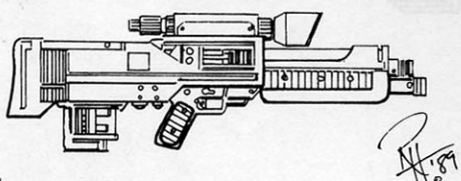
The larger, more powerful MIB is organized to make major interface assault landings. All marine units are organized into brigades, but only two interface brigades are active. The 7th MIB is composed of units of the 1st Marine Division. At the heart of the brigade is the 1st Marine Regiment. Supporting this unit in combat and providing transportation during the initial interface assault is the 7th Interface Group. Also attached is the 1st Armor Battalion, 3rd Battalion/4th Aviation Group B, B Company/25th Air Defense Battalion, and A Company/24th Engineer Battalion. The brigade also has a large contingent attached from the American Space Force which, as for the 6th MIU, provides orbital bombardment, interface assault support, logistical support, and transportation for the entire brigade.

At the time of this writing, the 7th Marine Interface Brigade was being reinforced by B Company/Artillery Battalion, as well as the remainder of the 24th Engineer Battalion. The entire unit is scheduled to be moved from its current location at L-4, but there is no indication as to exactly where it will go.

Weapons

For many American marine units, duty is served aboard foreign vessels. These ships are seldom equipped with American weapons or, more importantly, compatible ammunition. For this reason, American troops aboard these ships are generally equipped with foreign weapons. Aboard French vessels, FAM-90s are most commonly used; aboard German vessels, SK-19s are common, and so on.

However, most marines do not serve on foreign vessels. Instead, they are based in America or on American colonies and ships. Standard weapons for these personnel are American-issue equipment. Most are of American design and manufacture, some are based on foreign designs, and others are actually foreign-made weapons purchased by the American government for issue to its troops. An example of this is the French designed and manufactured FTE-10 gauss rifle which is used by American forces under the designation M-10. The following is a list of standard issue weapons for American marines.



M-4A1

The M-4 is an American-designed gauss rifle which, along with the M-5, replaced the M-2 as the standard infantry weapon of the American army and later the marines. The M-4 uses the same ammunition and clips as the French FAM-90. However, the M-4 has a replaceable energy cell located in the stock of the weapon which serves to supplement the ammo clip energy cell. This was done because many ammo clips were found to have defective energy cells, were losing their charge, or were accidentally shorting out too often. The stock-mounted battery has enough charge to fire one "dead" clip of 60 rounds. Power is routed automatically as needed. The M-4 ammo clip failure rate has dropped to tolerable levels, but the auxiliary battery unit is still kept fresh, just in case.

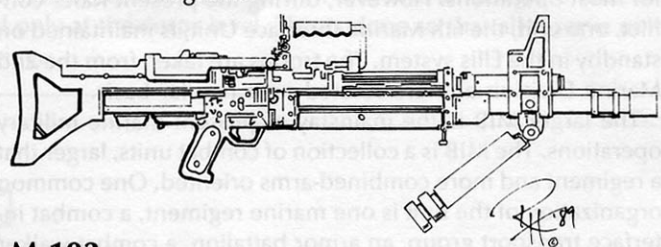
Additionally, a small switch will set the rifle to boost the muzzle velocity to 1600 mps. A fresh energy cell in the rifle will boost up to two fully charged clips.

Type: 4.5mm gauss rifle with integral 30mm grenade launcher *Country:* USA *Weight (Empty):* 4 kg *Length:* 73 cm (Bulk = 2) *Action:* Single shot or bursts *Ammunition:* 4.5 × 20mm flechette *Muzzle Velocity:* 1500 mps (1600 mps boosted) *Magazine:* 60-round box magazine with integral power cell *Magazine Weight:* 0.3 kg *ROF:* 3 *Aimed Fire Range:* 750 m (850 m boosted) *Area Fire Burst:* 10 (AFV = 1) *Area Fire Range:* 450 m (500 m boosted) *DP Value:* 0.5 (0.6 boosted) *Price:* Lv380 (Lv2 for 60-round disposable magazine, Lv1 for stock power cell).



M-57

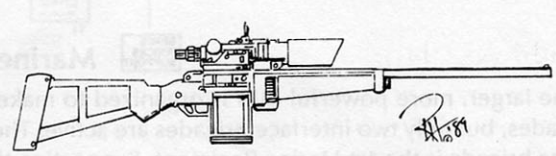
The M-57 is the military version of the Traylor Model 57 pistol. The military version is slightly heavier and more rugged than the civilian model. The M-57 is standard issue to field grade officers, medics, and vehicle crews. Also, although not standard issue for combat troops, many carry them as a backup weapon in case of emergency. The statistics for this weapon are the same as those for the civilian version listed in the **2300 AD** rules. The one exception is that the weight of the military model is .7 kilograms.



M-103

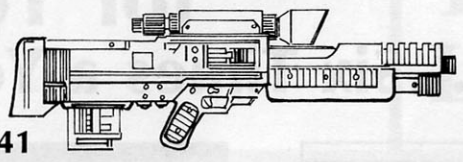
The M-103 is a team-support weapon designed for a high rate of fire and high stopping power. The weapon can be fired in a number of configurations. The simplest is the standard bipod mount. A high-mobility mount is also available and issued to all marine teams. The high-mobility mount has a recoil- and vibration-absorbing harness which the gunner wears around his torso. The harness has a flexible mounting arm which helps the wearer carry and wield the weapon. The third mount is a standard tripod which stabilizes the weapon, giving it a greater effective range (although this reduces its portability). Finally, the weapon can be vehicle mounted, giving it the same accuracy as the tripod mount, but providing higher mobility.

Type: Conventional machinegun *Country:* USA *Weight (Empty):* 5 kg *Length:* 109 cm (Bulk = 3) *Action:* Single shot or bursts *Ammunition:* 5.5 × 35mm fixed-cartridge ball *Muzzle Velocity:* 1100 mps *Magazine:* 100-round cassette or 50-round drum *Magazine Weight:* 0.5 kg (drum), 0.7 kg (cassette) *ROF:* 5 *Aimed Fire Range:* 700 m *Area Fire Burst:* 20 (AFV = 2) *Area Fire Range:* 480 m *DP Value:* 0.6 *Price:* Lv920 (Lv2 for box of 100 rounds, Lv5 for empty drum or cassette).



M-10

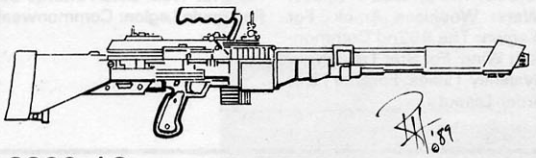
The M-10 is a sniper rifle of French design, the original designation being FTE-13. The characteristically long gauss rifle is used by two-man marine sniper teams. The weapon is as described in the **2300 AD** rules book with no modifications made.



M-41

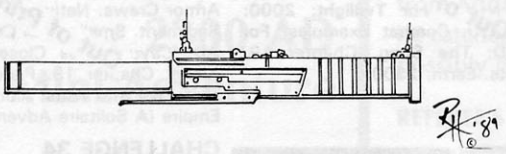
The M-41 is a special, silenced version of the M-4 rifle. The weapon is slightly heavier than a standard M-4 and is incapable of fully automatic or burst fire. The M-41 does possess the underslung 30mm grenade launcher, but that unit is not silenced.

Type: 4.5mm gauss rifle with integral 30mm grenade launcher *Country:* USA *Weight (Empty):* 4.5 kg *Length:* 76 cm (Bulk = 2) *Action:* Single-shot *Ammunition:* 4.5 × 20mm flechette *Muzzle Velocity:* 1500 mps *Magazine:* 60-round box magazine with integral power cell *Magazine Weight:* 0.3 kg *ROF:* 3 *Aimed Fire Range:* 750 m *Area Fire Burst:* 3 (AFV = 0.25) *Area Fire Range:* 420 *DP Value:* 0.4 *Price:* Lv400 (Lv2 for 60-round disposable magazine, Lv1 for stock power cell).



M-2290 A2

This heavy, man-portable plasma gun is a key weapon which is issued, as necessary, by the marine platoon leader. In most cases, these are supplied one per squad. In some situations, the weapon is mounted on an APC, often in direct support of the marine squad. The weapon is as described in the **2300 AD** rules. When it is vehicle mounted, the weapon can be fitted with a special ammo-loading mechanism which will continually feed the weapon from a 100-round box magazine.

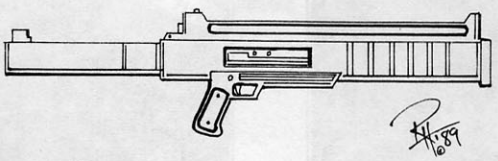


M-384 A1 "Javelin"

The Javelin is a squad-level antiarmor missile. The shoulder-fired missile is based on the French Blindicide-3. Although the French weapon is now considered obsolete, the improvements in the Javelin and its relatively low cost make it an affordable, light antivehicle weapon.

Type: Hand-carried light antivehicle *Country:* USA *Launcher Weight:* 14 kg *Missile Weight:* 3 kg *Range:* 1100 m *Guidance:* Automatic following gunner lock-on *Homing Value:* 13 *Attack Angle:* Overhead *DPV:* As tamped explosion (EP = 25) *Launcher Price:* Lv1500 *Missile Price:* Lv1300.

2300 AD



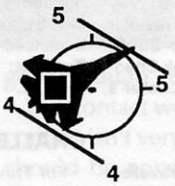
M-722 Stiletto

The Stiletto is a shoulder-fired, light air defense missile. The weapon is deployed at the battalion level with two Stiletto sections per marine weapons company. The weapon is showing signs of its age and is quickly becoming obsolete. The marine corps is now looking for a good replacement for the Stiletto, and is considering the French Guiscard Martel. However, initial procurement is a minimum of four years away, so the Stiletto will still be in use for a while yet.

Type: Shoulder-fired light air defense missile *Country:* USA *Launcher Weight:* 8 kg *Missile Weight:* 2 kg *Range:* 5000 m *Guidance:* Automatic following gunner lock-on *Homing Value:* 20 *Attack Angle:* Direct *DPV:* As tamped explosion (EP = 3) *Launcher Price:* Lv15,000 *Missile Price:* Lv6000. Ω

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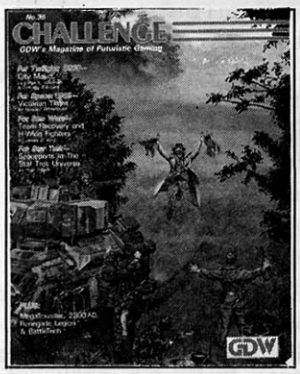
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The French Lieutenant's Connection



An Entry-Level 2300 AD Mini-Adventure

Marcus L. Rowland

PCs should be adventurers active on Beta Canum-4. Survivors of the adventures **Tricolor's Shadow** or **Beanstalk** are especially suitable, provided they are not actively pursued by the French authorities. **Beanstalk** is a useful referee's aid.

PLAYERS' INFORMATION

It sounds like an easy job, though the money isn't particularly good. The task is to escort one Frenchman from Adrian to Premiere and make sure he catches his ship to Earth. What could possibly go wrong?

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

A shady contact (someone the PCs trust to a limited extent, though not a close friend) wants the PCs to help him with a little problem. A certain French gentleman is about to travel to Earth for a short holiday, and he wants to avoid attracting any attention. The team is to escort him from Adrian to Premiere, then up the beanstalk to the orbital spaceport, and to make sure that he isn't pestered by the authorities. In particular, it is important that he not be searched when he goes through customs at the spaceport.

The contact won't reveal his client. The contact isn't very generous, and the team should be encouraged to haggle a decent wage—no more than Lv100 plus expenses per PC per day. There's a deadline; the team must ascend the beanstalk within 55 hours, or the Frenchman will miss his flight. *Note:* If you don't start this adventure in Premiere, you need to adjust the times given above and below. The contact will grudgingly pay a maximum of Lv200 per PC as an advance on expenses. Beanstalk tickets and papers will be provided when the team returns to Premiere.

The team is to get to Adrian as quickly as possible and take prebooked rooms at one of the seedier hotels there. The Frenchman will contact them, using the name of the man who hired them (Louis).

The Frenchman is Lieutenant Jean Luc

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to use his smaller dropships as supply ferries or transports for captured enemy material. Ships or personnel are never left behind at a staging base during an operation. The Rangers take care of their own because they know no one else will. Jumpships are normally requisitioned from their employer of the moment. This is a weakness Colonel Waco has tried for years to solve, but he has been unable to obtain jumpships for the Rangers' dropship group.

NOBLE'S BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

Noble's Command Lance

Pilot: Major Paulus Noble, Elite Warrior
BattleMech: BNC-3E Banshee "The Fixer"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: Lieutenant Jorge Delphinus, Veteran
BattleMech: CP 10-Z Cyclops "Deadeye"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: Captain Daverius Bunkerara, Veteran
BattleMech: QKD-4G Quickdraw "Loan Shark"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: Captain Marcus Aeolus Wernke, Veteran
BattleMech:WHM-6R Warhammer "Kill Counter"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Sanchuie's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Troy Sanchuie, Regular
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Night Stalker"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Erica Long, Regular
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Heartbreaker"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior "Jolly Jim" Smith, Regular
BattleMech: LCT-1V Locust "High Stepper"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Anita Michel, Green
BattleMech: LCT-1V Locust "Longfoot"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 5

Pointers' Heavy Air Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Alfred Pointers, Veteran
Aerospace Fighter: SL-15 Slayer "Derbytime"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 5, Aerospace Gunnery 6

Pilot: AeroWarrior Sergeant Nate Arachnar, Regular
Aerospace Fighter: SL-15 Slayer "Vacuum Missy"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 4, Aerospace Gunnery 5

Pilot: AeroWarrior Charlie Migele, Regular
Aerospace Fighter: SL-15 Slayer "Tailhunter"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 4, Aerospace Gunnery 5

Faust's Light Air Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant JoJo Faust, Elite Warrior
Aerospace Fighter: SL-21 Sholagar "Amenders Die Hard II"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 6, Aerospace Gunnery 7

BATTLETECH™

Pilot: AeroWarrior Sergeant Chalton Liard, Veteran
Aerospace Fighter: SL-21 Sholagar "Good Times XI"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 5, Aerospace Gunnery 5

Pilot: AeroWarrior Sasha Ponotowski, Regular
Aerospace Fighter: SL-17 Shilone "Death Delta VII"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 5, Aerospace Gunnery 4

Pilot: AeroWarrior Ross Malone, Green
Aerospace Fighter: SL-17 Shilone "I See You !"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 4, Aerospace Gunnery 4

NOBLE'S BATTALION, ROMY'S ASSAULT COMPANY

Romy's Assault Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Jacques Romy, Veteran
BattleMech: AS7-D Atlas "Earthshaker"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Giles Jefferson, Veteran
BattleMech: AWS-8Q Awesome "Nasty Nate V"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Willie "The Whiner" James, Regular
BattleMech: ON1-K Orion "Contraption II"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Jane Khorgul, Regular
BattleMech: WHM-6R Warhammer "Wolfkiller"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Smithers' Assault Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Rich Smithers, Veteran
BattleMech: AS7-D Atlas "Render VII"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Gordon McPherson, Veteran
BattleMech: AWS-8Q Awesome "Highlander"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Eli Ellerson, Regular
BattleMech: CRD-3R Crusader "Galil IX"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Suli El Hambra, Green
BattleMech: CN9-A Centurion "Jamal's Fist"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Swyccfer's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Geoffrey Swyccfer, Veteran
BattleMech: STG-3R Stinger "The Archivist"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant "Mad Jack" Livermore, Regular
BattleMech: STG-3R Stinger "Jack's Jalopy"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Lopez Martinelli, Regular
BattleMech: WSP-1A Wasp "Rico's Rocket"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: Shelli Britan, Green
BattleMech: WSP-1A Wasp "No Name III"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 4

NOBLE'S BATTALION, HENRY'S SUPPORT COMPANY
Charles Henry's Fire Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Charles Henry, Elite Warrior
BattleMech: AS7-D Atlas "Back From Hell"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Ted "Slim" Atkins, Veteran
BattleMech: ARC-2R Archer "Six-Gun Slim"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Roland Rogers, Regular
BattleMech: CRD-3R Crusader "Retribution IV"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Barry Manson, Regular
BattleMech: WSP-1A Wasp "Flankfinder"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 5

Ryan's Fire Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant "Red" Ryan, Veteran
BattleMech: MAD-3R Marauder "Death Dealer"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Bill "The Basher" McCoy, Veteran
BattleMech: ARC-2R Archer "Smarty Arty"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Alexandra Chunitza, Regular
BattleMech: WHM-6R Warhammer "Da Parmizana"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Ahmed "The Sage" Sander, Veteran
BattleMech: STR-3R Stinger "Swifty II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Klane's Fire Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant "Smilin' John" Klane, Veteran
BattleMech: BLR-1G BattleMaster "Windjammer"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant "Tiny Jim" Sundercrest, Regular
BattleMech: ARC-2R Archer "Li'l Morbid Me"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Ikoto Sendai, Regular
BattleMech: WVR-6R Wolverine "Red Night Warrior"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Miromo Ndeni, Regular
BattleMech: STR-3R Stinger "Impi Runner"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Noble's Battalion is the main striking unit of the Waco Rangers. It is organized to permit maximum offensive power against a specific target. The initial assault is usually conducted by elements of Romy's Company, followed and supported by Henry's Company. With 'Mechs normally organized into assault, fire, and scout lances, there is no confusion concerning assigned duties as occurs in the usual lance organization. Each lance is trained in specific mission profiles, and its members always know exactly what is expected of them. Although at first this seems as if it would create an inflexible training doctrine, this organization allows more flexibility and efficiency than normal, as has been shown through many successful raids.

Noble's Battalion also contains the regiment's main complement of AstroFighters for added firepower in an assault.

KELLY'S SUPPORT BATTALION,
KELLY'S HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
Kelly's Command Lance

Pilot: Major Albright Kelly, Elite Warrior
BattleMech: HBK-4G Hunchback "Backstabber"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: Lieutenant Rictor Van Owen, Veteran
BattleMech: TBT-5N Trebuchet "Guardian III"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: Captain Horace Nelson, Veteran
BattleMech: RFL-3N Rifleman "Shoot 'em up VII"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 3

Pilot: Captain Bethier Stocker, Veteran
BattleMech: BJ-1 Blackjack "The Equalizer"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Winston's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant D. D. Winston, Veteran
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Buttbiter"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Anita Chu Lai, Veteran
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Deathdarter"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Joe "Mr. X" Zeek, Regular
BattleMech: FS9-H Firestarter "Zippo II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: MechWarrior Peggy Sue Keith, Green
BattleMech: LCT-1V Locust "Grim Leaper"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 6

Sutherland's Medium Air Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Thomas Aquinas Sutherland, Veteran
Aerospace Fighter: SL-17 Shilone "Topographical Wonder"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 6, Aerospace Gunnery 6

Pilot: AeroWarrior Rosie "the Booples" Adlard, Regular
Aerospace Fighter: SL-17 Shilone "Backdoor Bopper"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 4, Aerospace Gunnery 5

Pilot: AeroWarrior Sung Kamakawa, Regular
Aerospace Fighter: SL-17 Shilone "Hammerer II"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 6, Aerospace Gunnery 5

KELLY'S SUPPORT BATTALION, WARREN'S MEDIUM COMPANY

Warren's Medium Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Douglas Warren, Regular
BattleMech: PNT-9R Panther "Prey Stealer"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Milo "The Old Man" McLeish, Veteran
BattleMech: VL-2T Vulcan "Dominus Vegus"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Ehrates Jones, Regular
BattleMech: CN9-A Centurion "Stellas Megnome"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Malachai Onerret, Veteran
BattleMech: STG-3R Stinger "Black Patroller"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 3

Neal's Medium Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Don Neal, Veteran
BattleMech: VND-1R Vindicator "Missy's Memory"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

BATTLETECH™

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Jose Sargossa, Regular
BattleMech: GRF-1N Griffin "Casa de Morte"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Chou Thoc Mai, Regular
BattleMech: OSR-2C Ostroc "Shumai XIII"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

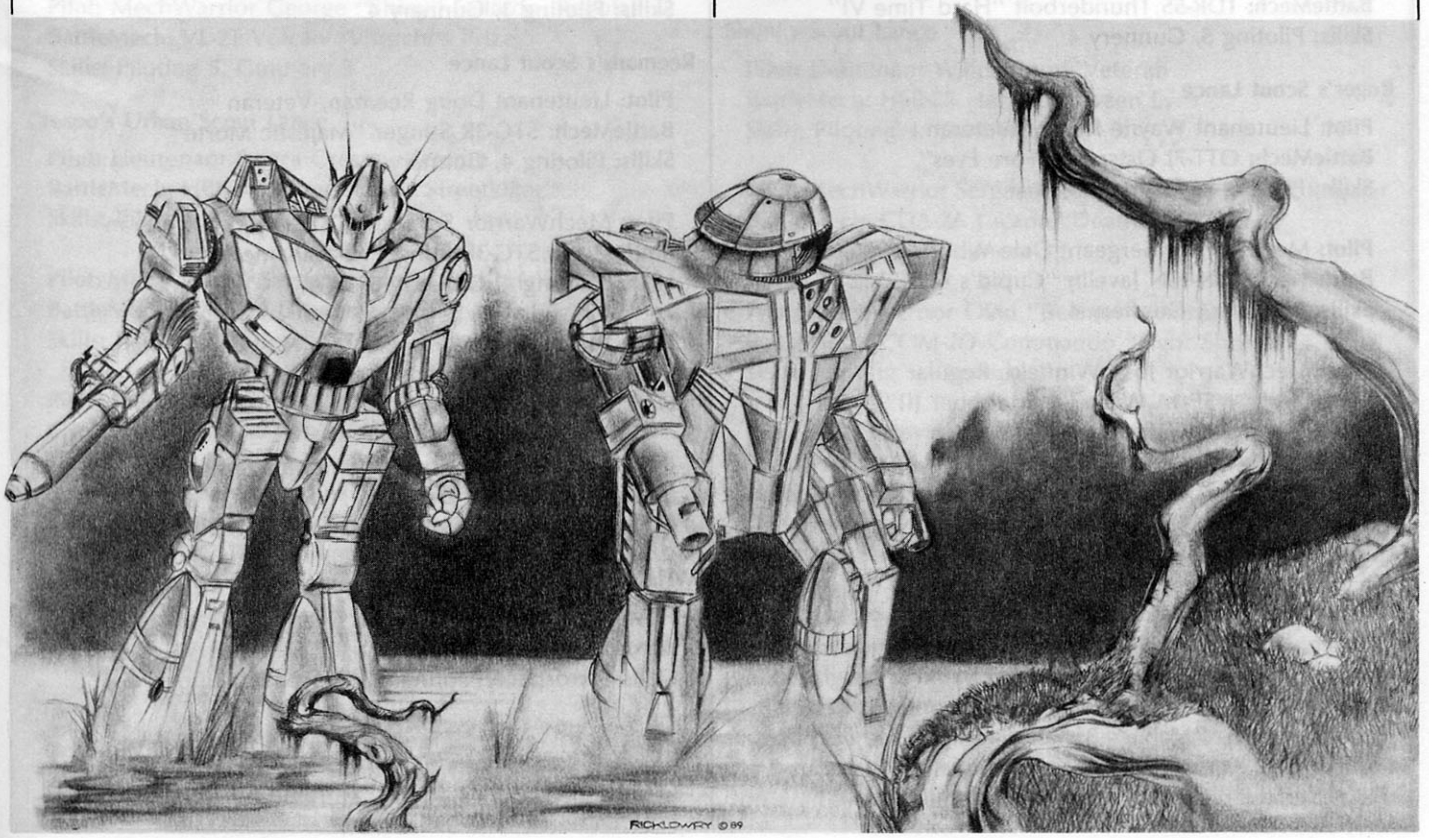
Pilot: MechWarrior Archy "Bare Bones" Boniface, Green
BattleMech: PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk "Sinner's Reward"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 4

Kristi's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Sally "The She-Devil" Kristi, Regular
BattleMech: PNT-9R Panther "Sorceress"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Melissa Marshall, Regular
BattleMech: JR7-D Jenner "Tuff Kid VIII"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Peter von Hoenger, Regular
BattleMech: ASN-21 Assassin "Sneaky Pete III"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4



Pilot: MechWarrior Donna de la Kalbe, Green
BattleMech: WSP-1A Wasp "Tingler II"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 6

KELLY'S SUPPORT BATTALION, PRESTON'S MEDIUM COMPANY
Preston's Medium Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant "Buzz" Preston, Veteran
BattleMech: WVR-6R Wolverine "To Badger You II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Walt "The Stare" Rickles, Veteran
BattleMech: WVR-6R Wolverine "Doppleganger II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Sevis "No Justice" Sims, Regular
BattleMech: GRF-1N Griffin "Respect Maker"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Tracy "The Cheek" Thomas, Regular
BattleMech: CRD-3R Crusader "Misfit XII"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Nathaniel's Medium Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant N.C. Nathaniel, Regular
BattleMech: PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk "Good Deed II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Marty Filmore, Veteran
BattleMech: SHD-2H Shadow Hawk "Range Warrior IV"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Teresa Williams, Regular
BattleMech: TDR-5S Thunderbolt "Hard Time VI"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Roger's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Wayne Rogers, Veteran
BattleMech: OTT-7J Ostscout "Fore Eyes"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Dale Whittiker, Veteran
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Cupid's Kiss"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Josh Winfield, Regular
BattleMech: WSP-1A Wasp "Muddobber III"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Amy Zimmers, Green
BattleMech: CDA-2A Cicada "Plague Bug"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 5

Kelly's Battalion is normally used as a secondary assault force in Waco's Rangers and is assigned most of the mop-up operations the unit must deal with. There is no end to the grumbling about this, but occasionally Colonel Waco sends Kelly's Battalion in ahead of Noble's Battalion—for morale purposes if nothing else. At the present, Kelly's Battalion is the weakest unit within the regiment because some recent losses have not yet been replaced. The strength of the unit has been increased, however, with the addition of Sutherland's Air Lance.

KELLY'S RESERVE BATTALION, KELLER'S HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
Keller's Command Lance

Pilot: Major C.H.G. "Charger" Keller, Veteran
BattleMech: AWS-8Q Awesome "Retribution"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: Lieutenant Eric "Action" Idlewild, Veteran
BattleMech: TDR-5S Thunderbolt "Masterstroke"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: Captain Will Reynolds, Veteran
BattleMech: BJ-1 Blackjack "Aces & Eights"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: Captain Mike "The Wit" Banks, Regular
BattleMech: PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk "Star Slayer"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Ise's Support Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Myodo Ise, Regular
BattleMech: GRF-1N Griffin "Shinano VII"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Billy Onoro, Regular
BattleMech: CRD-3R Crusader "Royal Blood"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Gerty "Moms" Montoya, Veteran
BattleMech: ENF-4R Enforcer "Moms' Machine"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Reemans's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Doug Reeman, Veteran
BattleMech: STG-3R Stinger "Majestic Morte"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Osaida Jijoro, Veteran
BattleMech: STG-3R Stinger "Sazaname"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Odo "Nasty" Nastica, Regular
BattleMech: WSP-1A Wasp "Dobber CXLIV"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Cochise Shinotan, Regular
BattleMech: DV-5M Dervish "Ninotoche"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Wright's Medium Air Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant P.D. "Buster" Wright, Veteran
Aerospace Fighter: TR-10 Transit "Stingray IV"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 6, Aerospace Gunnery 6

Pilot: AeroWarrior Sergeant Ian Van Allen, Veteran
Aerospace Fighter: TR-10 Transit "Viper's Bite"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 5, Aerospace Gunnery 6

Pilot: AeroWarrior C.C. Crane, Regular
Aerospace Fighter: LCF-R15 Lucifer "Devil Power"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 5, Aerospace Gunnery 5

Pilot: AeroWarrior Rastafarian Jones, Green
Aerospace Fighter: LCF-R15 Lucifer "Bumchaser"
Skills: Aerospace Piloting 5, Aerospace Gunnery 5

KELLER'S RESERVE BATTALION, REYNOLD'S SPECOPS COMPANY
Yuri's Assault Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Ben Ari Yuri, Veteran
BattleMech: VTR-9B Victor "Shield of Faith"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Rualto Fibrini, Regular
BattleMech: WHM-6R Warhammer "Mach V"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Festus "The Spook" Shelhan, Regular
BattleMech: ARC-3R Archer "Ghostmaker II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Reis' Assault Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant James "Striker" Reis, Veteran
BattleMech: DV-6M Dervish "Strikes & Spares"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Solla Simanon, Regular
BattleMech: OTL-4D Ostsol "Shelli VI"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior George "Shiny" Fellardo, Regular
BattleMech: VL-2T Vulcan "Vittuchi's Prize"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Crespo's Urban Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Saetta Crespo, Veteran
BattleMech: HBK-4G Hunchback "Streetkiller"
Skills: Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Abere "Fats" Hatsuse, Veteran
BattleMech: UM-R60 Urbanmech "Big & Bad!"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Bett Grim, Regular
BattleMech: UM-R60 Urbanmech "Brothers Grim I"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Seth Grim, Regular
BattleMech: UM-R60 Urbanmech "Grim Brothers II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

KELLER'S RESERVE BATTALION, TRAGEDOR'S RESERVE COMPANY
Tragedor's Medium Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Nigel Tragedor, Regular
BattleMech: VND-1R Vindicator "Topological Turmoil"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

BATTLETECH™

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Mark Nesrick, Regular
BattleMech: VND-1R Vindicator "Chaos Creator"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Alace D'Erlon, Green
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Jemmapes"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 6

Pilot: MechWarrior Amber Selliasson, Green
BattleMech: JVN-10N Javelin "Merrick's Memory"
Skills: Piloting 6, Gunnery 5

Myron's Support Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Mick Myron, Regular
BattleMech: ARC-3R Archer "Bombin' Betty"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 3

Pilot: MechWarrior Oreon McNee, Regular
BattleMech: CPLT-C1 Catapult "The Master's Work"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Morice Berengar, Green
BattleMech: SHD-2H Shadow Hawk "Magenta Mauler IV"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Shuni's Scout Lance

Pilot: Lieutenant Willis Shuni, Veteran
BattleMech: HER-2S Hermes "Green Eyes"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Pilot: MechWarrior Sergeant Zoniah "Zony" Rogers, Regular
BattleMech: CDA-2A Cicada "Death Petal II"
Skills: Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Pilot: MechWarrior Olan "Beamer" Phoron, Green
BattleMech: COM-2D Commando "Light Shouter"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

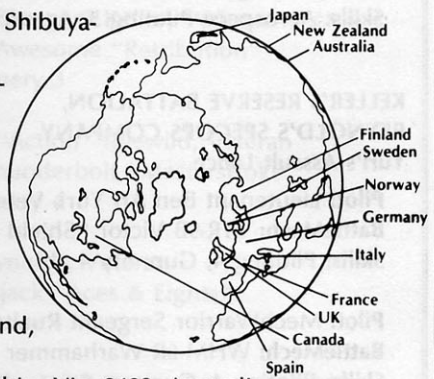
Pilot: MechWarrior Chetoc Sinn, Green
BattleMech: LCT-1V Locust "Sinner's Repenter"
Skills: Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

Keller's Battalion (usually called the reserve battalion to avoid confusion with Kelly's Battalion) contains the least experienced MechWarriors. Used mainly for mop-up actions or as a last resort, this is the main reserve for the regiment during a major operation. If the Rangers ever expand into two regiments, this battalion will probably act as the cadre upon which the second regiment is formed. Although some personnel and equipment changes have been made since 3025, the Waco Rangers still retain their individuality and regimental spirit. Ω

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GDW products (including **Traveller**) are available through distributors as follows:

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REVIEWS

The Next Empire

A Play-by-Mail, Tactical, Deep Space Confrontation.

Cyborg Games

$20.00 setup and first three turns at $6.00 per turn.

Concept and Design: **Frank Coker**

Programming: **Eric Oemig, Frank Coker**

Artwork: **Shafer Design**

Graphic Design: **Ars Graphica**

Play-by-mail game. Setup includes 64-page rule book, map of the game "universe," graphic sensor-map, base report and order sheet.

Two-week or three-week turnaround available.

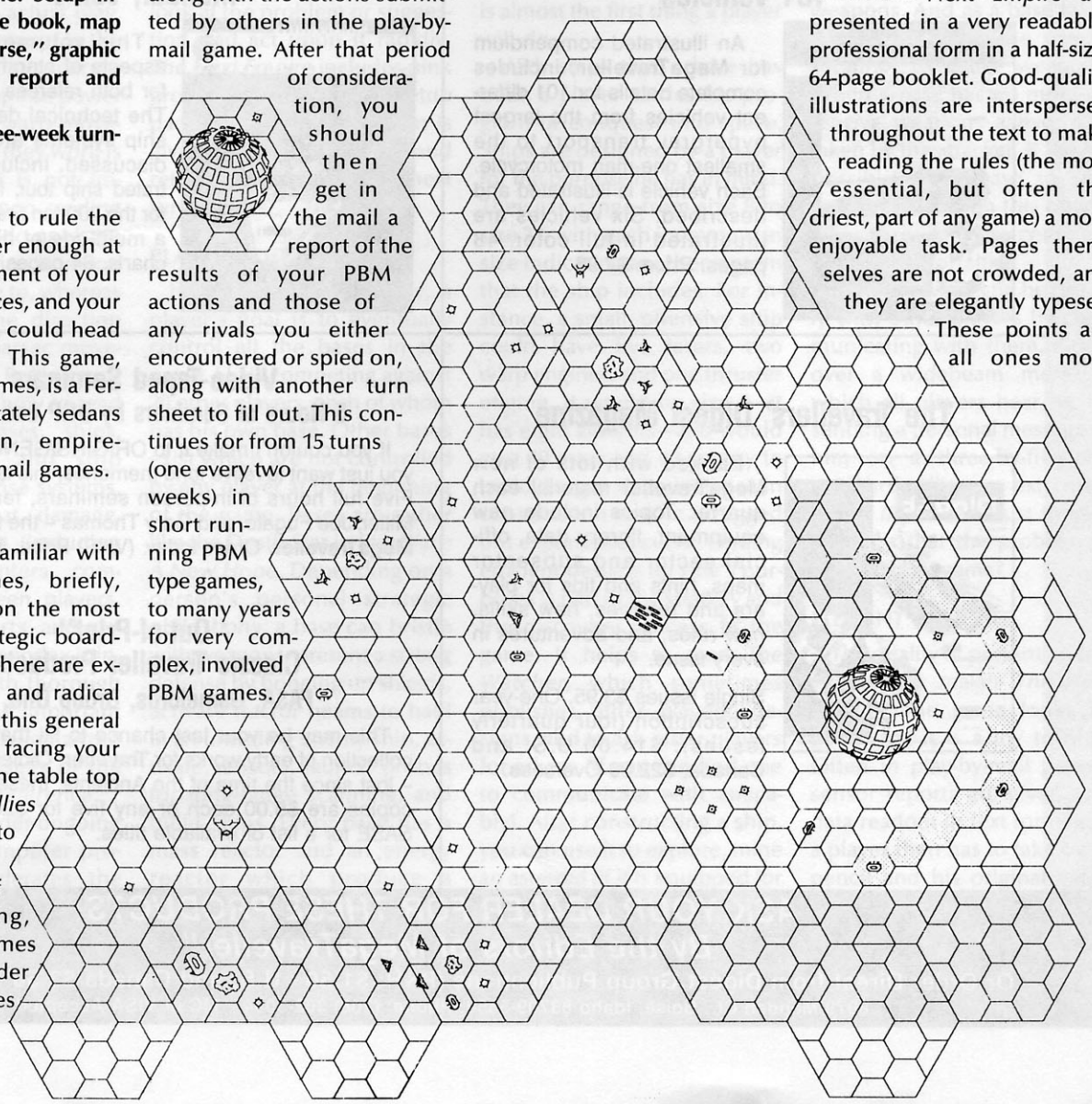
Would you like to rule the universe? Be clever enough at strategic management of your ships, your resources, and your alliances, and you could head *The Next Empire*. This game, run by Cyborg Games, is a Ferrari amongst the stately sedans of science-fiction, empire-building play-by-mail games.

PLAY-BY-MAIL

If you are not familiar with play-by-mail games, briefly, they are similar on the most basic level to strategic boardgames (although there are examples of unique and radical divergences from this general rule). Rather than facing your opponents over the table top as in *Axis and Allies* and being able to view the general tactical situation of everyone playing, in play-by-mail games you mail in an order sheet that describes actions you plan to take during that turn. Your turn is then executed through the moderation of a computer referee, and you only discover the type and condition of your rivals through encountering them or spying on them as a game action or through electronic probes or sensors.

The computer referee at that time will consider your actions, along with the actions submitted by others in the play-by-mail game. After that period of consideration, you should then get in the mail a report of the results of your PBM actions and those of any rivals you either encountered or spied on, along with another turn sheet to fill out. This continues for from 15 turns (one every two weeks) in short running PBM type games, to many years for very complex, involved PBM games.

PBM games usually cost a fixed amount to start (setup cost) of anywhere from $10 to $25, which may or may not include a certain amount of free turns. Then they cost a lower, fixed amount per turn that you participate ($2.00 to $6.50 per turn). Someone wins the game eventually (usually by defeating everyone else)—although sometimes alliances win—and receives either just the personal satisfaction of winning, as you do when you win a boardgame, or a t-shirt, or free participation in another game, or other prizes.



RULES

The rules to *The Next Empire* are presented in a very readable, professional form in a half-size, 64-page booklet. Good-quality illustrations are interspersed throughout the text to make reading the rules (the most essential, but often the driest, part of any game) a more enjoyable task. Pages themselves are not crowded, and they are elegantly typeset. These points are all ones most

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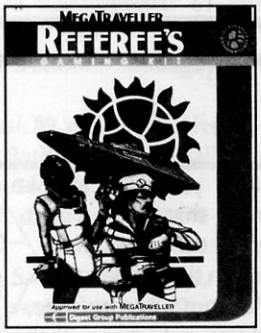
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role-playing and boardgamers take for granted, so some of you are probably wondering why I mention them. Well, in play-by-mail games, which are often run by a one- or two-person company, the quality and readability of the game can run the range from something as nicely done as *The Next Empire* to a booklet of photocopied sheets originally printed in condensed type on a dot matrix printer.

The Next Empire claims "clear, concise rules" in its advertising, and its rules are fairly clear and concise. The conciseness of the rules, however, sometimes leads to ambiguity. Often another example of a slightly more complex implementation of a rule might have clarified things later, when it comes to actual play. For instance, movement in the game is classified into parsec movement (like impulse power in *Star Trek*) and warp movement, but the way they work is quite different. It is not immediately clear upon reading the rules that you do not have to be facing the direction you wish to warp move to, whereas you must face the direction you wish to use parsec movement to move to. Rules cover game mechanics, how to read the maps, starbases, ships, asteroids, base and ship weapon and defense systems, movement, combat, damage, victory and defeat (including alliances), encounters, communication between players, reading turn reports, and giving fleet orders. An index is included, and is both thorough and very useful; all important charts are given or summarized on the last two pages of the book for ease of reference.

The rules are under ongoing change as the computer program which moderates the game is being revised, and the remaining bugs in it are hunted out and exterminated. Rules changes, and errata are given to new players with the rules book at setup. Ongoing rules changes are reported in *The Watcher* (an irregularly published newsletter/booklet containing stories, articles, questions and answers pertaining to *The Next Empire*) and are mailed to players with their turn results. As is common in many play-by-mail games, if enough players are unhappy with the way a certain aspect of the rules operates, it is sometimes revised. The relatively quick response of play-by-mail game operators to player suggestions for change or improvement is one refreshing aspect of play-by-mail and of *The Next Empire*. If you make a suggestion and support your position, most play-by-mail game operators will seriously look at the problem or suggestion and act upon it rapidly. *The Next Empire* includes pink problem reports with the setup package, and each of them is given individual attention and returned with the player's next turn results.

REVIEWS

PLAYING THE GAME

In *The Next Empire* play, a player's goal is to eventually control all the bases in the game. He is competing against 20 other players, each of whom has his own base. Other bases exist which are not controlled by any player at the beginning of the game. Bases are rather like the Death Star in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Depending on a person's personal strategic philosophy, a base can bristle with weapons, present a strong defense by bringing up shields, activate tractor beams to haul in an unwilling enemy ship, activate sensors, launch probes for long-range scanning, and build ships. Every base has a mass reactor and an energy reactor which produce a 10-percent gain in mass and energy each turn. To perform any action, such as activating lasers or constructing ships, a certain amount of mass, or energy, or both is used. Aside from the automatic 10-percent gain over the current mass and energy total which occurs each turn, the only other way to gain more mass and energy to work with is to mine asteroids and then bring their ore back to base. Needless to say, the more one wishes to accomplish, the greater one's mass and energy needs are, and also the more precious access to asteroids is. Building asteroid mining ships is almost the first thing a player will do.

With ships that a base has built, a player carries his program of conquest into space. Ships are designed by a player for the purpose he has in mind. They can range from size 8 to size 24, with each increment in size indicating another system that the ship includes. For instance, a small, offensive ship could have five lasers, two warp engines, and one thruster engine. It would be size 8—it has eight systems—and would cost 40 mass and 40 energy to build. Larger ships increase in construction cost in a ragged but exponential curve. Finding efficient designs for one's purposes is part of the strategy and the discovery process in the game. It helps to read *The Watcher*, which sometimes publishes other players' designs, and to ask other players for advice (if you can find one to communicate with amicably). After constructing a ship, you can use it to explore, mine an asteroid (if it is equipped for it), trade with other players by taking on cargo and exchanging it, or attack other players' ships or bases.

The combat system is fairly straightforward. If your ship hits, it damages what it hit; if the target has shields for the type of weapon you fire, it has an increased chance of being missed. And how much a hit damages the target depends on what sort of weapon you fire; certain weapons, like missiles, will even track the target long after you fire them. As a ship takes damage, certain systems begin to fail—it may lose movement capability or use of some weapons. And as a base takes damage, it loses the use of some of its active weapons. When a base has no more offensive weapons active, it is taken by the attacker. It is even possible for a base to self-destruct, although this option takes three turns to complete (it is also abortable).

If a player wants to, he can ally with other players by communicating with them, either over a widebeam message, which all players hear, or by sending a personal message to him on a three-by-five-inch notecard. Allies are extremely useful *if* you can trust them—but isn't that the problem in any strategy game?

ELEGANT TOUCHES

The quality of presentation is what really makes *The Next Empire*. The game looks so good that it is a joy to play. Often in play-by-mail games, sensor reports are given as a data readout in text form, and a player then has to take out a pencil and his original game map, and plot what his forces see on it. Cyborg Games has simplified and beautified this process with what it calls

graphic sensor-maps. Rather than just give you text sensor and observation reports, it gives you pictures—an individualized map of what you see, detailing the positions of your forces, the relative size of objects in your field of view, the facings of ships, and a hex grid with coordinates written on it for determination of the position of objects in relation to you. By looking at a graphic sensor-map, a player can tell at a glance the threats and opportunities which face him. The graphic sensor-map is the most elegant aspect of *The Next Empire* which makes it hard to beat as a space combat/build-your-own-empire game. It gives you the complexity of turns with a great many options and levels of strategy which are almost unlimited, and then makes all of that complexity easy to deal with in its graphic sensor-maps. All the nitty-gritty data a player has to deal with doesn't swamp him; the map organizes it for him.

EVALUATION

The conquer-the-(fill in the blank) type of strategy game seems to work well as a play-by-mail game. *The Next Empire*, while it is by no means original in its premise, is a very good example of a science-fiction, empire-building game. It provides its players with many more options for actions than many games of its genre, allowing for a complex game with many factors to consider in play. It then makes those factors easy to handle through its method of presenting organization to players in its text reports and graphic sensor-maps. The game runs on time, and the rules work as written with few bugs in the program which executes them.

The only difficulties I have with *The Next Empire* lie in two areas: suitability for beginners and price. While it is not gut-wrenchingly difficult to learn *The Next Empire* never having played a play-by-mail game, it could be quite a bit easier. Like many play-by-mail games, it assumes a knowledge of certain terminology on the part of its players which a truly new player can be slightly boggled by. On the other hand, it does not err in this department by nearly as much as many other games. Although a partial example of a completed turn sheet is included in the rule book, perhaps including an actual completed turn sheet and sensor reports with a brief explanation of them or a short page on beginning strategy might help beginners.

As to price, *The Next Empire* is definitely on the high end when it comes to play-by-mail games, with a setup of $20 and a per turn cost of $6. Other games of the same play-by-mail genre are available from other companies for quite a bit less. Playing *The Next Empire* is like buying a luxury sports car; you get what you pay for—much more elegant presentation and many more options for actions. You just have to realize that there are other, less costly options that will get you where you want to go—but not with the same style.

SpaceTime

Blacksburg Tactical Research Center. $14.95.

***Game Design:* Greg Porter**

***Cover and Interior Art:* Thomas Darrell Midgette**

***Additional Inking:* Kirsten Almstedt**

***Diagrams and Everything Else:* Greg Porter**

Complete role-playing game in a 126-page permabound book, three-hole drilled.

SpaceTime is a science-fiction role-playing game in the cyberpunk tradition (not to be confused with *Cyberpunk*, before which it came out). Its back copy touts it as "so gritty that you can feel it between your teeth," and if you are looking for a combat system which comprehensively and realistically covers all the options in cyberpunk genre combat, *SpaceTime* may be the game for you.

BACKGROUND

SpaceTime is set in a gaming universe in which the earth is recovering from WWIII. Mars had been colonized before the war, and then after the war it "ruled" earth (for earth's own good) for a period of time. Contact has been made with other inhabited planets which, strangely, so far seem to only contain other humans. Linguistic and cultural similarities between humans and the races so far discovered make many scientists posit a former interstellar human civilization which, ages ago, was decimated and survived only as individual enclaves of humans on widely separated planets—one of which was earth.

Earth itself is a place of vast wealth and vast poverty in which the government is a puppet of the corporations and is maintained only to prevent one corporation from taking sole control of earth. Justice tends toward vigilantism; street crime is rampant and commonplace. Advanced technology has made augmenting human capabilities with built-in weapons and computers easy, but, due to the expense, only for the elite, those who are employed by corporations or those who are employed by organized crime. Human life is cheap overall, but technology is expensive.

A chronology of events is given, as is a brief breakdown of the current status of the geographical regions of the earth, the solar system, and the inhabited planets outside the solar system. Technological advances are covered, including the acquisition of a drive which allows faster-than-light travel in spaceships. Overall, the basic outline of things as they stand historically, geographically, culturally, and technologically is presented—enough to explain the current situation, but not explain it in a great deal of detail.

CHARACTERS

The character generation system is a point-based one in which a character uses a set pool of points to "buy" the attributes (characteristics) and skills he wants. This type of system allows players to construct the type of character they want to play, planning his strengths and weaknesses. For those players who always feel that they could have had a better character if they had been allowed just a few more points, a system for taking disadvantages such as phobias or being overweight to gain more initial generation points to work with is provided as an option. Disadvantage taken can often later be "bought off," either literally with money (simulating surgery or psychoanalysis) or with points earned from experience in using a skill or attribute. This type of system should be familiar to anyone who has played *Fantasy Hero* or *Champions*. The *SpaceTime* system is not the same as those two game systems, of course, but the principles are similar. Abilities—either attributes or skills—can be augmented through technology, provided that the character acquires enough money to have the appropriate surgery done and any equipment added. Such augmentation includes modified vision, fingernail blades, computer sockets with insertable skill chips to enhance skill levels, armor, and about anything else ever mentioned in a cyberpunk novel or movie, or invented by a player or referee.

Character skills are well documented and explained.

Skills are even graphed on a page to clarify which skills can affect others or when having a level of skill in one field can give you a reduced level of skill in another field in which you have not trained. Skill use is understandable after a very thorough reading of the rules, and to the author's credit, he does provide ample examples to illustrate skill use and combat. However, the overriding difficulty in dealing with *SpaceTime*'s skill use and combat system is the same one found in, say, original *AD&D*. There are too many special situations and modifiers to the basic rules for anyone to easily utilize them all. This is complicated by the fact that the modifiers for different situations are not in easily recallable increments—for instance, by fives or tens. Instead, each individual modifier has a different value which makes sense within the game system, but which makes it difficult to remember while playing.

For instance, the following are modifiers to climbing, taken from page 39 of the rule book.

Modifier	*Amount*
Many handholds, not slippery	+0
Small handholds	−6
No handholds	−15
Smooth surface	−5
Slightly slick (wet)	−5
Slick (slimy)	−10
Very slick (greased)	−15
Each +10 degrees of tilt (to 50 degrees)	+2
Each −10 degrees of tilt (to −50 degrees)	−4
Assisted by external devices (ropes, etc.)	+1 to +15
Each phase of preparation (up to +10)	+1

I know that I could never remember these precise numbers. This way of modifying every skill for every situation provides a system which is realistic, but in effect results in writing almost a different rule for every individual situation. The result is a lot of page-flipping or consultation of charts, which drastically cuts down on game-enjoyment time.

One nice touch to the manner in which *SpaceTime* modifies skills is that the above modifiers are not added or subtracted, but are percentage modifiers to a character's skill level. A table is provided for easy calculation of this, but basically the character's chance of successfully using a skill is always modified in proportion to his skill level, not absolutely. If a character with a 100-percent chance of success has a negative 50-percent modifier, then he has a modified 50-percent chance of success; if a character with a 50-percent chance of success has the same negative modifier, he has a modified 25-percent chance of success, not a zero-percent chance as in some game systems. On the other hand, this necessitates referring to yet another table.

COMBAT

The combat system is the meat of *SpaceTime*. Fully one-third of the rules book is devoted to combat in its various forms and its adjuncts—projectile combat, hand-to-hand combat, vehicle combat, explosives, mines, flame weapons, gases, megaforce (the author's term for heavy artillery, nuclear weapons, etc.), armor, damage, and first aid and healing. Ship-to-ship space combat is not covered, but the author notes that a future supplement will be devoted to it. The author's comment that "a SFRPG needs spaceship rules no more or less than a modern RPG needs rules for naval combat" brings up a valid point. In many instances, this type of combat actually is better handled by boardgame or miniatures rules than by role-playing rules.

The combat system is incredibly thorough and comprehensive. It is very realistic in its detail and therefore is very deadly. It is also very time consuming. The damage system includes separate damage effects for different damage types, such as bruising damage or piercing damage. The damage system bears resemblance to ICE's system used in *Space Master* and *Middle Earth Role playing* in its division of damage types and "critical hit" elements. In many places in the combat sections, shortcut rules are given in italic to speed play. I would highly advise using them; the overall flavor of combat is not unduly changed by their use, and they simplify matters somewhat.

EVALUATION

I have mixed feelings about *SpaceTime*. As a science-fiction, role-playing game it succeeds as well or better than many on the market. If you like both comprehensive combat rules and detailed situational modifiers, this game is for you. Its thoroughness is remarkable in some ways: the game includes rules for vehicle and weapon generation, including all relevant statistics and hit locations—the works. It does the same kind of job with robots, creatures, aliens, drugs, diseases, and many other factors barely covered in other games. It even includes optional psionics rules.

On the other hand, as a cyberpunk game, it seems thin. Nowhere does it say much about the Net, the global computer network, or how to deal with netrunning—having a character try to break into a computer system looking for some specific information. The Net and secrets stolen by using the Net are a major theme in cyberpunk literature, and yet here they are scantily dealt with. In fact, the cyberpunk elements of the game are limited to just a few discrete areas—like augmentation and medical advances in the character generation and technology sections, a short section on the cyberpunk genre in a referee section, and a one-page glossary of cyberpunk terms. In fact, the place where the cyberpunk atmosphere is probably most evident in the game is in its cover painting.

I recommend this game for fans of realistic combat in science-fiction, role-playing games, but those who are looking for a cyberpunk game may be disappointed.

A cyberpunk science-fiction game can be played using *SpaceTime*, but most of the cyberpunk in it will come from the referee's own imagination and research, not from the rules.

REVIEWS

Note

If you have any products you would like to see reviewed or if you are interested in writing a review, please drop me a line at GDW.

Additionally, I would welcome any suggestions for "theme" columns which you might be interested in. Ω

Classifieds

All gaming-related ads are accepted, subject to amount of space available and good taste. Buy or sell out-of-print booklets. Advertise fanzines. Find people to play against.

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CHALLENGE 25. Please send price and shipping cost to Yves le Rhun, 8 Rue Gustav Charpentier, 94 240 L'Hay Les Roses, France. (39)

IBM PC PROGRAMS for **2300 AD.** Also looking for **2300 AD** and **MegaTraveller** players in the Battle Creek, Michigan area. Rick Sherman, 155 Brentwood Dr., Battle Creek, MI 49015. (39)

A COPY OF THE original *Spacefarer's Guide to Aliens*. Please quote a price (including shipping costs). Contact Bryan Borich, 3890 50th St., San Diego, CA 92105-3005. Phone (619) 563-8172. (39)

ALIEN MODULE 2, **K'kree** by GDW. Original or photocopy needed desperately. Will pay top dollar. Write Scott Streibich, 2125 Jackson Bluff Rd., Box B202, Tallahassee, FL 32304, or call (904) 575-9233. (39)

GOOD COPIES of **High Passage** 1, **Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society** 1, and **Travellers' Digest** 2. Send info to Jimmy Simpson, 1735 Ridgeview Dr., Arlington, TX 76012. (39)

FOR SALE

SPREADSHEET Templates: Apple II Appleworks spreadsheet templates for **MegaTraveller,** craft design, *Spacemaster* starship design, **2300 AD/Star Cruiser** ship design. Send $2.00 for each spreadsheet, and either send $3.00 for a disk, or send a disk (3½ or 5¼), and send an SASE to: Glen Allison, 1306 W. Pearl, Pasco, WA 99301. (39)

PRE-PUBLICATION editions of *Battles*, the only wargame that teaches principles of strategy on a tactical scale. Send $17.95 ($15.95 plus $2.00 S&H) to Perry N. Jones, 35 Bates St., No. Brookfield, MA 01535. (39)

TRAVELLER supplement 9, **Fighting Ships**, in excellent condition, plus Compuserve's *Mega Wars 1* commander's manual (including poster-sized space chart and four poster-sized space vessel blueprints). Make an offer for one or both to: Marty Kloeden, Box 5335, Springfield, VA 22150-5335. (39)

MANY **TRAVELLER** and related products. Send SASE for list of available items or send want list. $5 for miscellaneous **Traveller** grab bag, post paid. Wes Allison, 901 S. Boulder Hwy. 34, Henderson, NV 89015. (39)

CLUBS

PLAYERS WANTED. New club forming in the Charleston area of South Carolina, with an emphasis on **MegaTraveller,** but including **2300 AD, Twilight: 2000, Space: 1889,** *Cyberpunk*, and other games. Contact Mark or Kate Gelinas at (803) 553-2425, or write to 102 Akron Ct., Ladson, SC 29456. (39)

PLAYERS WANTED. **Traveller** referee, new to New York Finger Lakes region, would like to organize gaming group. Adults only please. Bob Range, 211A Elliot Acres, Romulus, NY 14541. (39)

PBM. Play-by-mail campaign based on the defense of Efate. *Espionage and Intrigue*. Zhodani, Vargr, and Imperial players requested. Write to Bob Range, 211A Elliot Acres, Romulus, NY 14541. (39)

PLAYERS WANTED. Looking for **2300 AD** or **Traveller** players in NW Arkansas area. Please contact Derek Browning at (501) 273-0490. (39)

PLAYERS WANTED. **Traveller** referee seeking players in Washington DC area. Contact Scott Kellogg, 6610 Glassell Ct., Alexandria, VA 22310, or call (703) 765-4278 evenings. (39)

EXCHANGE

SWAP IDEAS and materials for **MegaTraveller, 2300 AD,** and **Twilight: 2000.** I've been running a **Traveller** campaign for four years and am now switching to **2300 AD.** If you'd like to swap designs, scenarios, or ideas for any of these RPGs, contact Mark Reily, Box 2 Union Building, Newcastle University, Shortland N.S.W. 2308, Australia. (39)

T-TECH Exchange. Free exchange of **MegaTraveller** ship, vehicle, robot, equipment designs, etc. You send me yours, I'll send latest T-Tech package with designs from other participants. SASE for more info. No cost, no prices, just trade! T-Tech Exchange, C/O Philip Athans, 7783 Kensington Lane, Hanover Park, IL 60103. (39)

FANZINES

VOYAGES is taking off—broadly covering science-fiction gaming, including **Traveller** and **2300 AD**, and doing so with a dual goal: to provide usable gaming material, and to be enjoyable and entertaining just to read. Four-issue sub $9.00 U.S. Starlance Publications, 50 Basin Dr., Mesa, WA 99343. (38)

CONVENTIONS

VALLEY CON 14. Science-fiction, fantasy, and comic convention Sept. 9-10 at the Days In Conference Center, 600 30th St. So., Moorehead, Minnesota. Video rooms, an art show and auction, a hucksters' room, numerous panels and demos, a banquet, and a variety of gaming events which will include *AD&D, Star Trek: RPG, Runequest, Rolemaster, Spacemaster, Star Wars, Dr. Who, Call of Cthulhu,* and more (courtesy of Valley Con). Send SASE to Valley Con 14, PO Box 7202, Fargo, ND, 58108, or call (701) 232-1954. (39)

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LA ORIGINS '89. June 29-July 2, Los Angeles, California. Sponsored by Strategicon at the LA International Airport Hilton Hotel, Origins '89 will feature all types of family, strategy and adventure boardgames, role-playing games, miniatures games, and computer games, as well as a flea markets, auctions, and an exhibitor area. Also seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808, or call (213) 420-3675. (39)

TOLEDO GAMING Convention 7. October 7-8, Toledo, Ohio. The seventh annual edition of Northwest Ohio's largest gaming convention will be at the university of Toledo's Scott Park Campus. More than 140 events including role-playing, strategy, tactical, board, and miniatures tournaments, two auctions, demonstrations, painting contests, and exhibitors. Features include *AD&D, Battletech, Warhammer 40K, Starfleet Battles, GURPS, Star Wars, ASL, Axis & Allies,* **Space: 1889**, and others. Send SASE to Toledo Gaming Convention 7, C/O Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Rd., Toledo, OH 43615. (39)

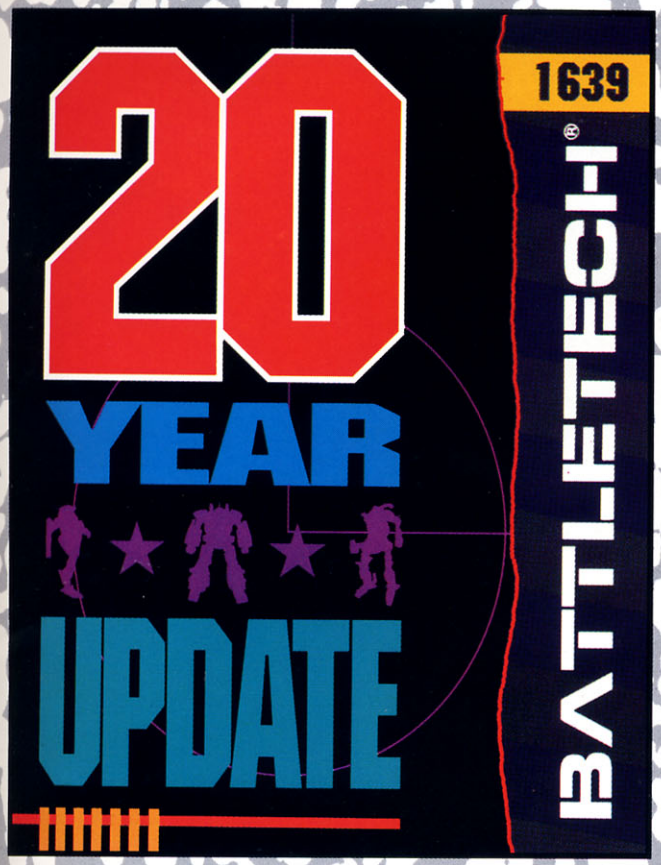
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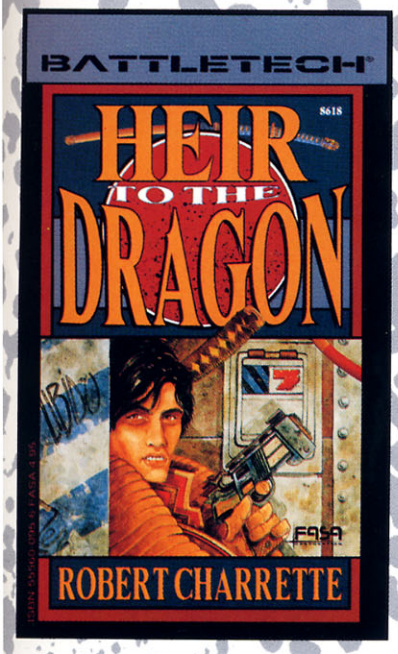
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